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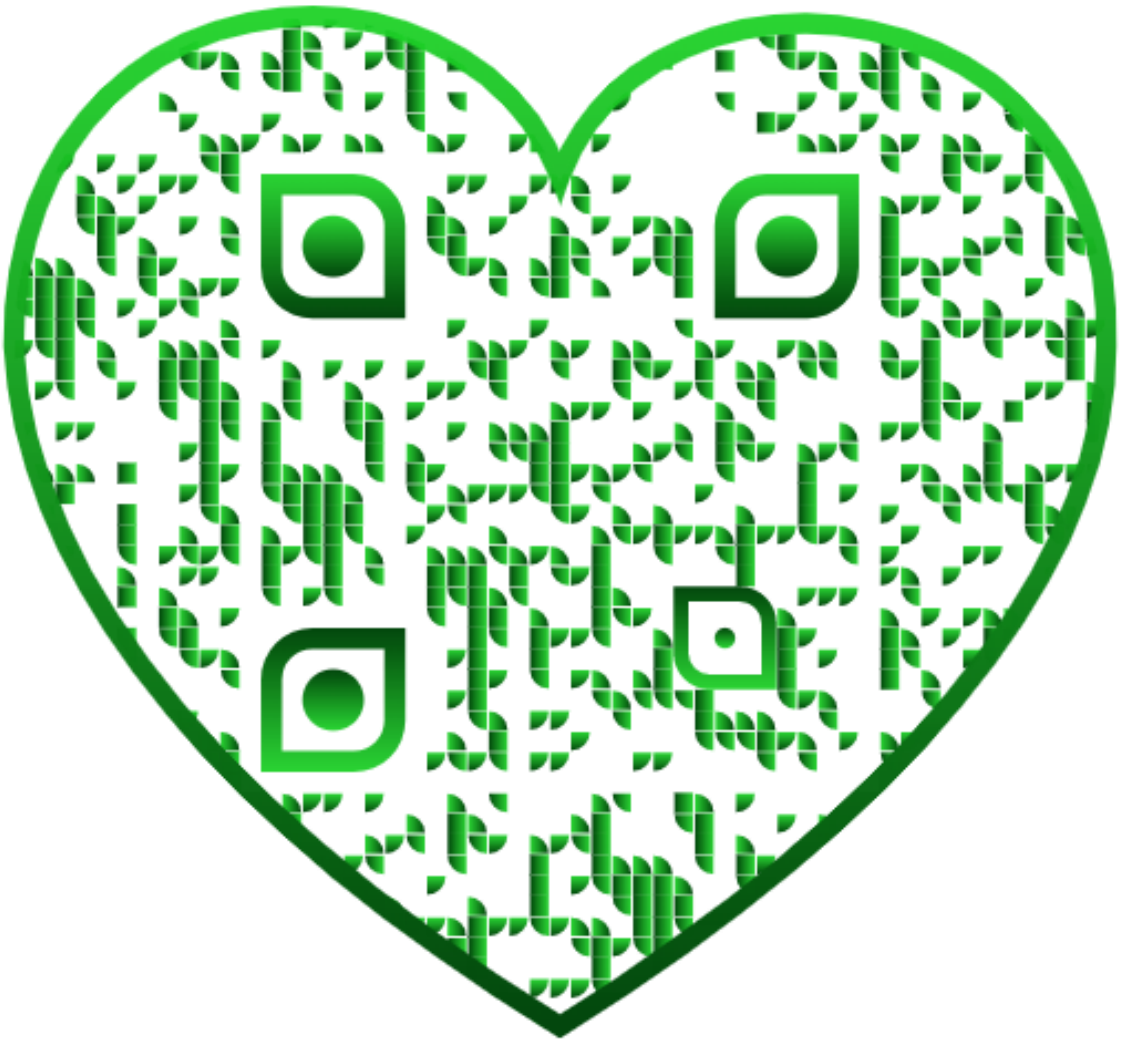

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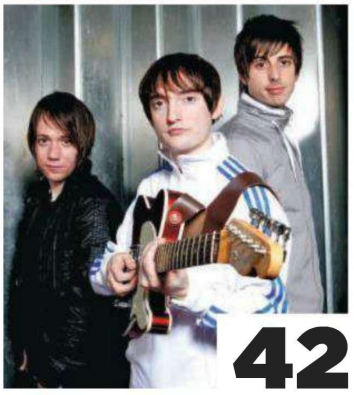

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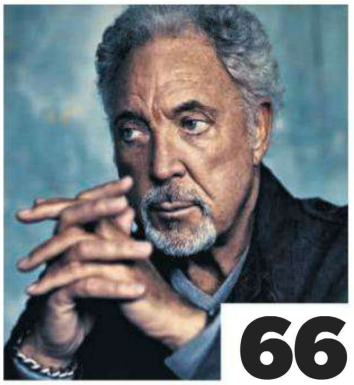

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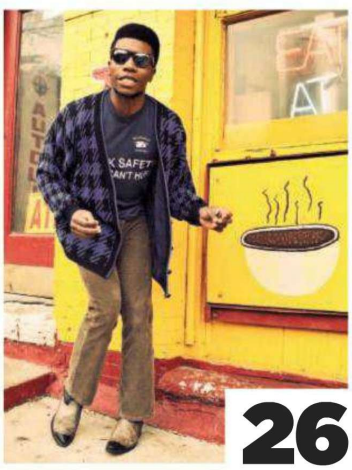

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BONKERS AND BRILLIANT; MEET WILLIS EARL BEAL

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ON REPEAT

THE SOUNDS RATTLING ROUND THE SKULLS OF THE NME STAFF THIS WEEK

TRACK OF THE WEEK

TOTALLY ENORMOUS EXTINCT DINOSAURS

American Dream Pt II

Ahh, the American Dream. You never hear anyone banging on about French Fancy or the Romanian Rumination. Thankfully, TEED's effort dodges Razorlight-style chest-thumping or Marina-style diva self-obsession in favour of good honest bangin'. And Orlando Higginbottom should know a thing or two about ignoring expectation and setting your stead on your own terms. This is, after all, someone who's managed to shrug off the obligations of a Christian-and-surname-combo that should have made him a shoo-in as a QC or lord, instead of becoming one of the UK's most exciting young producers. No mean feat.

It's melancholic and beautiful, then ramps up the rave to a cruel climax

This taster of forthcoming debut album 'Trouble' begins with a melancholy, beautiful early-hour ambience that was once the province of classic DJ Shadow, but it's not long before Orlando ramps up the rave, building to a cruel climax with a noise like someone shaking a talking doll to death before cutting loose with a rearing, hammering womp like a technoid Triceratops tearing through your mind forest. It's the most aggressive thing we've heard from him yet, and throbs with a bug-eyed energy.

Emily Mackay, writer

LIANNE LA HAVAS

Is Your Love Big Enough?

Ploughing the Radio 2, Corinne Bailey Rae-esque niche of acoustic singer/songwriter-ing, this may be the sweetest-sounding romantic demand around. All handclaps, delicately plucked guitars and honeyed tones, the title track from La Havas' debut will be on your mum's most-played list within the week.

Sarah Pope, writer

FOUR TET

Jupiters

The hugely prolific Kieran Hebden's latest single reaffirms his position as one of the UK's best and most consistent electronic artists. This time he opts for an almost two-part affair, kicking off with squiggly, dreamy synths before breaking into a bass-heavy climax strongly reminiscent of recent collaborator Burial. Exciting.

Alan Woodhouse, Senior Sub-Editor

SUMMER CAMP

Life

Not a Des'ree cover, sadly, but a track that begins with Lizzie Sankey singing about her "*bloody hands*" reaching out for us. Aaah! The track is pure Kylie meets Donna Summer, and by that we mean: four-to-the-floor, hot-pant-heavy and rather classic-sounding.

Ashley Raphael, writer

ANIMAL COLLECTIVE

Honeycomb

After the experimental meandering of largely impenetrable Record Store Day release 'Transverse Temporal Gyrus', the Baltimore oddballs regain a degree of focus here among the bubbling synths and aquatic production. It seriously rewards repeat listens, but the emphatic chorus augers well for that long-awaited 'Merriweather...' follow-up.

Rick Martin, News Editor

MELODY'S ECHO CHAMBER

Crystallized

Powered along as it is by a spirit-of-'66 psych bassline, you could guess Tame Impala were involved here. But while the latter's Kevin Parker may put his musical stamp on it, it's Melody Prochet's vocal that makes this a thing of propulsive dream-pop beauty. Their first tune, but hopefully not their last.

Hamish MacBain, Assistant Editor

FUTURE OF THE LEFT

I Am The Least Of Your Problems

Always angry. Always loud. Always spikey. Always proud. "*I am the least of your problems but I don't mind*" yowls ex-Mclusky frontman Andy Falkous on the first cut from FOTL's third album 'The Plot Against Common Sense'. Nothing's changed: they bring the rock and they bring it hard, fast and cutting.

Tom Howard, Reviews Editor

COCOROSIE

We Are On Fire

A soaring comeback for the Parisian freak-folk sisters with a penchant for 'taches and recording in the bath. "*Now I can see in the middle of the night*" they squeal over psychedelic flutes and throbbing underwater synths. With these two, mystic night vision *is* plausible.

Jenny Stevens, Deputy News Editor

PASSION PIT

Take A Walk

Striving to straddle the peak of the electro-pop mountain now that La Roux is lost down some rocky crevice, the Pit return with a bright synth blast heralding their "expansive" July-bound second LP. Expansive as in: trebling the amount of synths on it. We're on board.

Jamie Fullerton, Features Editor

NIPSEY HUSSLE FEAT RICK ROSS

Proud Of That

Producer Jiggy Hendrix's whirring, sleazy grime hook fits Nipsey's earnest flow perfectly while Rick Ross' one-verse cameo is scene-stealing. The fact that you can imagine listening to this while driving with the top down and the bass on "ridiculous" makes it a contender for future song of the summer already.

Priya Elan, Assistant Editor, *NME.COM*

ANDY WILLSHER, GETTY

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UPFRONT

WHAT'S HAPPENED AND WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MUSIC THIS WEEK

Edited by Rick Martin

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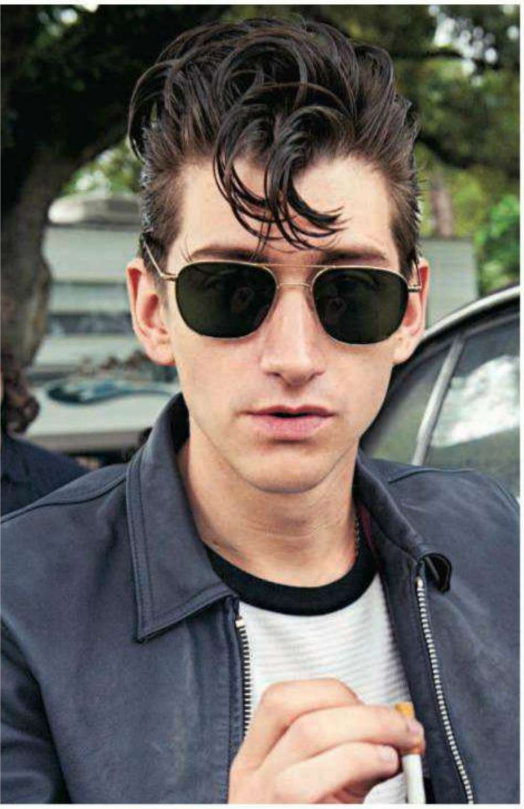
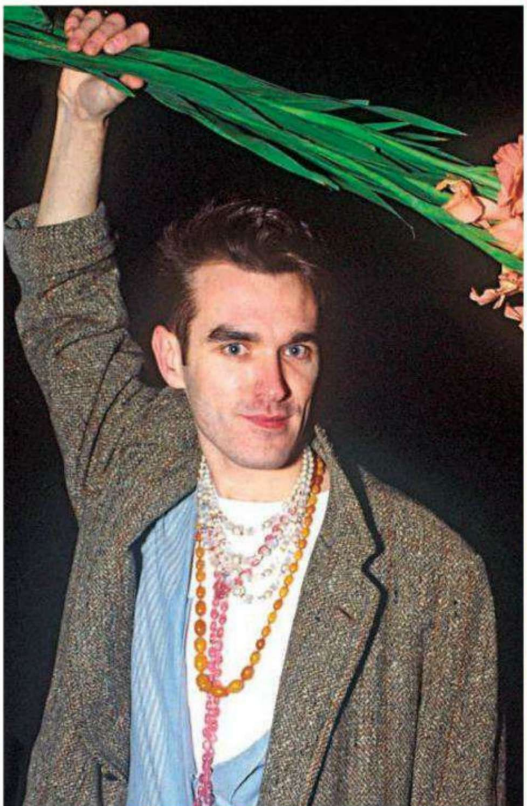




NME'S ULTIMATE ICON: HERE'S YOUR FAVOURITES

You've voted in your tens of thousands, and now we reveal the eight names in the running for the title – and find out who a host of artists are backing

MAIN EVENT

Over our 60-year history, *NME*'s pages have played host to a succession of musical icons. But who's stood out head and shoulders above the rest? This is the question we've been asking our readers over the past two months, and you haven't let us down – there's already been hundreds of thousands of votes cast at *NME.COM/ultimateicon* since the launch of our huge 60th anniversary poll. This week, we reveal the eight artists who've made the quarter-final shortlist. From classic names like John Lennon and David Bowie through to modern-day icons like Alex Turner and the late Amy Winehouse – via the heroes of '80s indie (Morrissey), grunge (Kurt Cobain) and Britpop (Liam Gallagher) – it already reads as a who's who of the stars who've lit up our pages over the past six decades. Head to *NME.COM/ultimateicon* to have your say – in the meantime, find out who a host of artists will be voting for as we move a step closer to revealing the overall winner...

Which legend will be your *ultimate* icon...?

GARY JARMAN THE CRIBS *on...* KURT COBAIN

"I got into Nirvana just before Kurt died, when I was about 14. He really influenced my principles and politics throughout my teenage years and turned me on to other bands who had similar agendas. It was through him I found a bunch of great smaller independent labels like Sub Pop or K Records and bands like Sonic Youth. You don't see big rock stars doing that now – and that's what makes him an icon."

FELIX WHITE THE MACCABEES *on...* LIAM GALLAGHER

"It's all about that swagger – when I was young I just *believed* in that. The way he walked onstage at Maine Road in '96 said it all. But it's also sometimes forgotten what a great singer he is. That's not really talked about much anymore with Oasis, but it was so important – he was almost a soul singer. I wouldn't have played guitar or even thought it was a viable option without Oasis."

WRETCH 32 *on...* AMY WINEHOUSE

"Amy was and is an icon because she defines real, homegrown, organic music and her talent was just phenomenal. She wrote and performed like no other – she really was one of kind, one of the great artists and her music touched so many people. It's a shame she isn't with us in person today but her music will live on for many generations to come; it's timeless. She made history and will forever be iconic in my eyes."

RICHARD HAWLEY *on...* ALEX TURNER

"Alex is an icon for two reasons. First of all, because he's one of the most original writers of his generation – the simplicity of his arrangements was what raised them head and shoulders above everyone else. He has a real colloquial quality to his lyrics – wit and gentleness too – and he writes about very real things. And secondly because, despite the huge success they've had, he hasn't become an arsehole."

WILL REES, MYSTERY JETS *on...* JIMI HENDRIX

"Jimi's not just an icon, he's also the ultimate guitar hero because he showed the world what a guitar was really capable of. He transformed it into an instrument that had orchestral possibilities, through sheer volume and the unique style he played it with. He opened up the floodgates for all kinds of sonic exploration. But Jimi was also much more than someone who could write a brilliant song – he was a real free spirit, too."

SANTIGOLD *on...* MORRISSEY

"I have been listening to Morrissey since I was in my early teens – I love his lyrics, sense of melody and iconic style. The images he creates with his lyrics are so vivid, personal, heartfelt and emotional – and also really smart. The biggest thing I've learned from Morrissey is that your writing and lyrics must always be good. When you write classic songs, they last a lifetime."

JORDAN GATESMITH HOWLER *on...* JOHN LENNON

"John Lennon was the world's first true pop icon. In The Beatles, he was able to take the blues and rock'n'roll and twist them into something totally pop and accessible. And then there's his solo work – there was still that unmistakable grit behind some really bizarre arrangements. Even now, people grow up in either Stones families or Beatles families. For me it was always the latter - and I put that squarely down to John."

GRIMES *on...* DAVID BOWIE

"I'm really into performers who harness the visual aspect of what they're doing, while also manipulating their style, changing and adapting. And that's obviously something Bowie's done a lot throughout his career. To go through each of his eras and remain so iconic makes him an ideal artist. In the pop world, that's the ideal way to approach music and entertainment – they're totally different things but to bring them together and still do both? I really respect that."

How to vote

Kurt, Amy, Mozzer, Jimi... who's rocked your world more than anyone?

To have your say and vote for your favourite icon, head to *NME.COM/ultimateicon*, where you can also watch exclusive video interviews with Kasabian, Two Door Cinema Club and The Who's Roger Daltrey on their choices. And keep your eyes peeled on future issues of *NME* and *NME.COM*, where we'll be announcing more on our massive 60th anniversary plans.

DEAN CHALKLEY, ANDREW WHITTON, LFI, MARTYN GOODACRE/RETNA, GETTY, ANDY WILLSHER, CARA BLOCH, PIETER M VAN HATTEM, RICHARD JOHNSON, ANDY FALLON

Even a cheeky rib-tickle couldn't part those tight lips

THE XX'S NEW ALBUM UNCOVERED

As the band kick off a trio of intimate London gigs to premiere new material this week, we follow the trail of breadcrumbs leading to their second album

IN THE WORKS

The xx's follow-up to their 2009 self-titled debut is already one of the most hotly anticipated albums of the year – and this week the band are finally taking the wraps off the new material at a series of intimate London shows.

But what can we expect from the elusive threesome's comeback? Although keeping typically tight-lipped about the content, they've left a hefty trail of clues in the form of their blog, *xx-xx.co.uk*. Set up to coincide with starting the recording process last year, it's become an online scrapbook of songs and pictures that are inspiring them. It's a typically eclectic mix, ranging from '90s Brit R&B soulstress Shola Ama to the Cocteau Twins and plenty of new bands too. One of those, New Look – a band very much in The xx's inner circle – tell *NME* that a total stylistic about-turn is unlikely. Singer Sarah Ruba says: "Romy [Madley-Croft] came out to one of our shows in autumn in London. We asked her what we could expect from the new album and she said, 'It's like the old stuff, only better.'"

The one and only snippet we've had so far, the demo 'Open Eyes', hardly moves them in a new direction. It's also worth factoring in Jamie Smith's instrumental 'Touch Me', which premiered on Australian radio back in February – the pounding steel drum-laden skit reflecting the dancier direction Jamie's been promising in interviews.

So where are the band's breadcrumbs leading? We delved headfirst into their blog to find out...

AN XXTRA LIFT

The new bands getting a leg up on The xx's blog

NEW LOOK TRACK: 'NAP ON THE BOW'

Sarah Ruba (vocals): "It's so amazing they picked our track. We know they like us and we toured with them a couple of years ago – there's definitely a mutual respect and love there. It makes us feel very warm inside that they're inspired by us."

TRAILER TRASH TRACYS TRACK: 'CANDY GIRL'

Suzanna Aztoria (vocals): "The xx have supported us and championed us and their fans have warmed to us because of this. We supported them on their first tour in late 2009 in very modest venues. We knew from then they were going to be huge. They're the best music to come out of London for the past five years."

THE NEW ALBUM'S KEY INFLUENCES

The clues from links on xx-xx.co.uk

FLEETWOOD MAC – SILVER SPRINGS

If you want to head in a darker direction, it doesn't get blacker than Stevie Nicks' cry to ex-lover Lindsey Buckingham: "*You'll never get away from the sound of the woman that loves you*".

GRIMES – OBLIVION

One of the most banging tracks of 2012. Pointing to a heavy pop feel perhaps?

TLC – CREEP (SUPER SMOOTH MIX)

This remix offers nothing out of the ordinary, but shows the pop influences will still be a huge.

MALCOLM MCLAREN – MADAME BUTTERFLY

The eerie operatic ditty from punk's master. But it's unlikely we'll see an operatic direction-change.

EDDIE HOLMAN – FOUR WALLS

A smouldering 1970 gem. Could we see a soul groove on the album?

THE CURE – JUST LIKE HEAVEN (DIZZY MIX)

Dizzy morphs the goth icons' hit into a slowed-down disco groove – interesting considering their previous minimal drum sound.

BLONDE REDHEAD – 23

Distorted guitars, layered synths, but pure pop hooks. It could hint to a lusher backdrop to Romy's vocals.

DRAKE – FIREWORKS (DEADBOY SLO MO HOUSE EDIT)

This house remix affirms the band's club influences – and that this will be very much a Jamie xx record.

CHERYL LYNN – IN THE NIGHT

If you're going to make a clubbier album, where better to start than this 1981 bouncing disco groove?

QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE – INTO THE FADE

Thrashing guitars are a little out of sync for The xx's after-hours sparseness, but this could imply a heavier sound.

THE BEST OF NME VIDEO.COM THIS WEEK

CLASSIC BEASTIE BOYS VIDEO INTERVIEW

tinyurl.com/cbroawz

Following the death of Adam 'MCA' Yauch, we look back at this 2009 clip where they discuss how rapping on ice can save the music industry.

THE BEST TRACKS OF THE '90S

tinyurl.com/chu7fvm

Babylon Zoo, Mariah and East 17 all get love from the likes of Alabama Shakes (pictured), Two Door Cinema Club and Metronomy.

GASLIGHT ANTHEM'S EXCLUSIVE *NME* SESSION

tinyurl.com/cqmbokj

Frontman Brian Fallon popped down to our office earlier this month to play us this unique acoustic version of new single '45'.

MARILYN MANSON'S 'INTIMACY ISSUES'

tinyurl.com/c6cj984

In the second part of our interview, the God Of Fuck reveals the dark journey he undertook to make his new album 'Born Villain'.

PAMELA LITTKY, ROGER SARGENT

HOW TO MAKE $500,000 IN JUST SEVEN DAYS

She's little known outside cult circles, but Amanda Palmer has smashed all records on crowd-funding site Kickstarter. Here's how she did it

Half a million dollars: more than a good week's takings for the Bonos and Adeles of this world. But for Amanda Palmer, singer with cult US vaudeville pop duo Dresden Dolls, it's beyond extraordinary. Finding herself without a record deal and seeking ways to fund the release and promotion of her new solo album '...And The Grand Theft Orchestra', Palmer set up a page on fan-funding site Kickstarter on April 30. Within 48 hours, she'd been pledged a total of $300,000 (donators get a download of the album for $1, with deluxe versions for higher pledges). After a week she'd more than doubled that figure and smashed the site's previous record – and is already eyeing up hitting a million before the project ends on May 31.

But how did a relative unknown become the world's hottest new music entrepreneur? *NME* spoke to her to find out...

Most of the money went on Bob Dylan's old cardboard signs

STICK IT TO THE MAN

Amanda: "This isn't a shtick or a gimmick – the idea of releasing a record on a major label again for me is absurd. The music industry has long needed a new system and crowd-funding is it. The game is reversing – the media and the machine are following, rather than creating, the content."

BUILD A LOYAL FANBASE...

"Being successful on Kickstarter is stupidly simple – it's about building a fanbase and connecting with them constantly, not just when you're trying to sell them something. So along with tweeting and blogging, I'm a maniac with email lists at my gigs."

...AND STAY ENGAGED

"The minute the link to my Kickstarter was out there, my fans did the majority of the work for me by sharing it on social networks. They're my most powerful promotional tool. The project was talked about on national TV in the US but it didn't really affect the donations – the lesson being that my connection with my fans and, in turn, their friends is 1,000 times more powerful than a giant billboard in Times Square."

IGNORE THE CYNICS

"I've been criticised because although I'm not a huge name, I'm also not a new artist starting out – people have said I shouldn't need the cash. Which is completely backwards... I need it badly. I don't have a massive bank account or label to borrow money from. I'm *exactly* the sort of person who should be doing this – I want to play music to an audience who feel ownership over what I'm doing."

START A NEW WAY OF THINKING

"I don't want to be seen as mysterious – I want everyone to feel involved in my music. I don't think someone like PJ Harvey is like that – there are plenty of artists out there who just want to make their music in peace, they don't really want their fans involved or offering feedback.

"I'd actually love to live in a world where Britney Spears could say: 'I want to do a pop tour with 50 dancers and elephants, but instead of going to a corporation to fund it, I'm going to ask you, the fans.' It'd be beautiful – all of her fans turning up and seeing the dancing elephants, thinking: 'We made that happen.' That's how people are going to feel when they get my album – crowd-funding is a revolution, a cosmic wind for the human race."

KICKSTARTING THEIR CAREERS

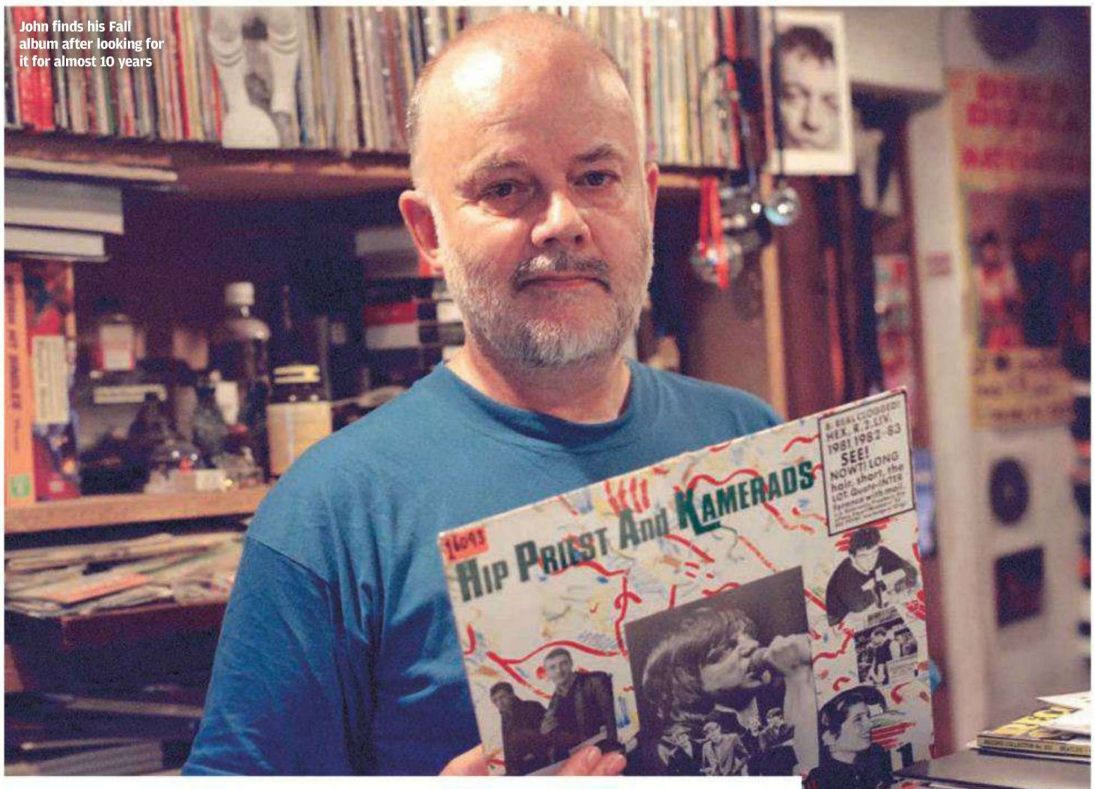
Others who've turned to crowd-funding for a timely boost

TUNE-YARDS
Merrill Garbus is helping to fund a children's music charity, SF Rock Project Lending Library, through Kickstarter. She reached her target of $10,000 last week.

THE BLACKOUT
Back in 2010 the Welsh band offered Christmas dinner and Xbox sessions in return for donations to fund their new album on PledgeMusic, another popular crowd-funding site.

EMMY THE GREAT
Another Pledge =Music afiçionado, the London singer-songwriter said she was keen to "skip the middle man" when making her 2011 album 'Virtue'.

THE LIBERTINES DOCUMENTARY
NME photographer Roger Sargent's doc *There Are No Innocent Bystanders*, which followed the band's fractious 2010 reunion shows, was made available on DVD through PledgeMusic.



John finds his Fall album after looking for it for almost 10 years

WHAT'S HIDDEN AWAY IN JOHN PEEL'S RECORD COLLECTION?

The legendary DJ's monster vinyl hoard is being put online, and his wife Sheila Ravenscroft says fans will find some unexpected discoveries

It's one of the most legendary record collections on the planet, and now for the first time John Peel's record hoard is being opened up to the public. Each week until October, the names of 100 titles in the iconic DJ's collection of 26,000 vinyl albums are being listed, with links to stream tracks and Peel's own notes on each record.

The Space project, an Arts Council-funded website, will be open until October, releasing new nuggets from Peel's archives alphabetically each week.

Peel's wife Sheila Ravenscroft told *NME*, "Obviously his listeners knew his taste in music, but nobody's ever gone through his whole collection card by card to see what's there. So it's really quite interesting." The index card system Peel kept to organise his collection has never been seen before and will be published beside each record. "He spent hours meticulously typing them up," she says.

Although this select collection is temporary, Ravenscroft is hopeful that Peel's full archive can eventually be shared with the world, if funding could be made available. Last week, campaigners in Bradford called for a new centre for creative arts, which could also house his records. "Even when John was alive he worried about what was going to happen to his collection, because he always wanted to keep it together. I think it should be something that people have access to," said Ravenscroft. "But of course it's all about financing, because the sheer volume of it is a massive headache."

WHAT'S COMING NEXT?

Some of the records that will appear online this week

ROGER DALTREY
Sheila Ravenscroft: "I was surprised to see so much Roger Daltrey solo work in John's collection. He loved The Who. I remember when 'Tommy' came out and he got an early copy of it. We listened to it all night in his flat at full pelt. It almost made your ears bleed!"

THE DAMNED
"When John first started listening to punk he was sort of disapproved of because people thought, 'What on Earth are you doing?' He'd gone from much calmer music to being absolutely mad on punk and people couldn't get their heads around it. He just thought it was terribly exciting."

DICK DALE
"John adored surf guitar music and that was exactly what you got with Dick Dale. We saw him when he was over here so many times. John absolutely adored that whole genre of music – it reminded him of the time he'd spent in the States."
See Thespace.org for more info

GOOD WEEK

Newport
Bins not collected? If you live in this Welsh town you've got a new person to complain to: councillor P Xain from Goldie Lookin Chain.

Against Me!'s Tom Gabel

Tom Gabel
Against Me!'s singer came out as transgender following lyrical hints, and was met with support from fans, charities and bands.

MBV fans
Kevin Shields has claimed his band's new LP is "almost done" – and curiously told fans to expect a new drum'n'bass direction.

BAD WEEK

Festivals
After the Sonisphere, the latest to bite the dust is Rough Beats, which was due to feature Azealia Banks at Clapham in Yorkshire.

'King Tubby Meets Rockers Uptown' coming to a palace near you

Reggae heads
Prince Harry's apparently eyeing a career as a reggae DJ after meeting Bob Marley's widow. Mercifully he plans to do only private events.

Dolphins
Tests revealed this week that dolphins at Connyland Zoo in Switzerland were fed a heroin substitute at a rave last November.

CARA BLOCH, GUY EPPEL, DAN KENDALL, GETTY

GRIMES: 'POP IS IN RUDE HEALTH'

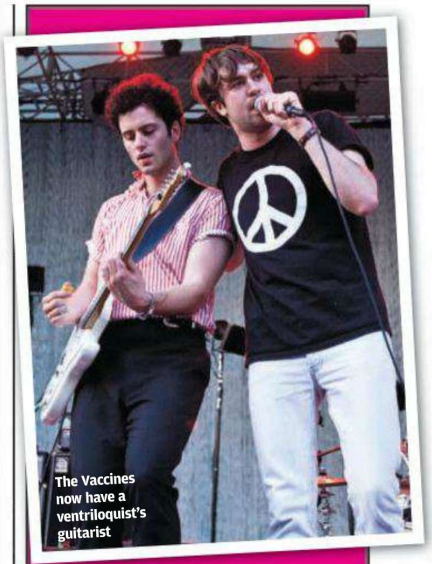
The fast-rising Canadian star tells us she's giving the genre 'authenticity' – without diluting her vision

No compromise! And that includes mixing stars, stripes, spots and camouflage

After releasing her latest album 'Visions' in January – her third LP in 12 months, no less – Grimes has thrust herself firmly into the limelight. But her newfound status as the planet's fastest-rising electro visionary isn't coming without its challenges, as she explains to *NME*. "I'm pretty unwilling to compromise on any level, artistically or otherwise," she declares. "Like when you go to something and people want you to wear some sexy outfit. Obviously, because of the kind of music I make and the way my image is, people want me to change it. So many people have been like, 'You should work with a certain producer', which is ridiculous because I am a producer. It doesn't make sense to me."

Besides putting out this year's most delirious collection of electropop with 'Visions', the Canadian DIY producer/singer/artist has also been showing her art in New York and launching her own line of jewellery – brightly coloured vagina 'pussy rings'. But how does the offstage Grimes (aka Claire Boucher) differ from her eccentric stage persona? "I don't put on a costume and go onstage," she says. "That's just how it is all the time. I'm trying to approach pop music in what I perceive to be an authentic way."

And the future's looking rosy for pop music too, says Boucher: "The fact that you have Jamie xx producing for Drake – pop music's going in some really distinct directions right now. People don't necessarily give it credit because it has the machine behind it. But I think that good art is good art and it doesn't matter how much money has been thrown at it."



The Vaccines now have a ventriloquist's guitarist

CHAZZSTOCK MOVES TO ONE-DAYER

The Vaccines, The Horrors and Tribes will still headline shortened event

Chazzstock Festival, the event taking place in memory of late Ou Est Le Swimming Pool singer Charles Haddon, has been cancelled and replaced with a one-day event. Originally due to take place at Stanford Hall in Leicestershire, it'll now be held at Wolverhampton Civic Hall and Wulfrun Hall on June 10, with original headliners The Vaccines, The Horrors and Tribes – all close friends of Haddon – playing as originally planned.

WIN! TICKETS FOR EXCLUSIVE ENTER SHIKARI GIG!

Band to play Tunbridge Wells Forum, crowned Britain's Best Small Venue in association with JD Roots

Bellybutton fluff is the prized Enter Shikari memento

Fresh from tearing up the US on their recent tour, St Albans' finest Enter Shikari are helping *NME* in association with JD Roots celebrate Tunbridge Wells Forum's victory in our search to find Britain's Best Small Venue with a very special gig on June 5. The gig will be the band's first visit to the venue since 2005 and singer Rou Reynolds has promised the band will be on top form, telling us: "Small venues have a special place in our hearts. You can't have a scene without them."

So, how can you get into this truly one-off show? Well, tickets for the gig are absolutely free and are sure to be like absolute gold dust, but you can still make it in via our special competition.

We've got 75 tickets to give away for the show. Find out how to get them below, and for any additional info you may require, visit *NME.COM/smallvenues*. See you down the front!

HOW TO ENTER

Scan the QR code on this page with your smartphone and get extra features, information and video footage.

1. DOWNLOAD A QR READER

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3. VIEW CONTENT

You will automatically be redirected to exclusive extras.

Mobile network and/or Wi-Fi charges may apply. If you don't have a smartphone, go to NME.COM/extra. Competition open until midnight, May 25, 2012.

Pieces Of Me
SLOW CLUB

Rebecca Taylor and Charles Watson on the sheer terror of a Muse gig, soap opera ambitions and obsessive Beyoncé dance routines

My first gig
MUSE, DONCASTER DOME

Rebecca: "I must've been about 14 and I didn't realise people would mosh. I didn't understand it and I was terrified. I ran to the back of the room and rang my dad crying, and asked him to pick me up. But he wouldn't – I had to wait 'til the end, so I stood at the back with my friend's dad until it was all over."

My first album
CHER, 'BELIEVE'

Charles: "I bought it for my sister, from Meadowhall in Sheffield. Does that count? It didn't so much drive me up the wall as drive the whole country up the wall. That whole Cher comeback was awful, wasn't it?"

The first song I ever fell in love with
THE BEATLES, 'BLACKBIRD'

R: "It's my earliest memory – I still will say that's my favourite song. It reminds me of being a child – we used to go on holiday to Filey. My dad had a tape that he made with The Beach Boys on one side and The Beatles on the other. We'd rotate this tape for two weeks every summer. That was the one I'd always look forward to; I knew every word."

The book that changed me
RAYMOND CARVER, *WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT LOVE*

C: "It's basically lots of short stories that don't seem to finish or have any really positive message. If you read about his life, he was going through a very dark time – it's a very honest book and it shows you a different side to writing."

My favourite lyric
JOJO, 'MARVIN'S ROOM (CAN'T DO BETTER)'

R: "At the moment – not of all time – it's this, JoJo's retort to Drake's song 'Marvin's Room'. She's done a 'Fuck You Right Back' kind of song to it. She goes, "*And when you're in her/I know I'm in your head*". Such a good lyric."

My favourite artist
STEFAN MARX

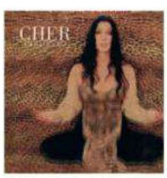
C: "He's done a couple of books, a lot of colourful drawings, some sketches and stuff. We met him in Hamburg last year – I knew we were touring out there and I dropped him a line. He brought a load of books and T-shirts and we did a big swap, gave him some records. There's a publisher called Nieves Books that does a lot of 'zines and he's part of that crew – I found out about him on there. He's really cool."

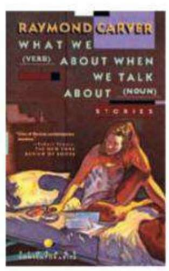
Favourite TV show
EASTENDERS

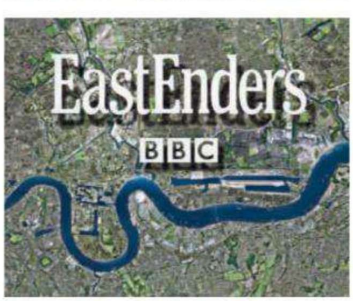
R: "I'm addicted. I fancy, like, every male character apart from Ian Beale. With iPlayer and Sky+ I've probably not missed an episode since about... 2007?! Even though sometimes it's a bit shit, I stick with it, I get through it. My dream is to be a soap actress so I'm learning. It's research, I think."

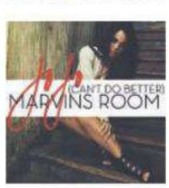
Right now I love
BEYONCE

R: "The last album, '4', is insanely amazing; it really grew on me. The song 'Countdown' is the future of R&B. It's bonkers! The only thing I like to do is dance to R&B. I want to start a dance school. Like when you're a little girl and you make up dance routines in your back garden. But for adult women who are clearly weird! That's my plan... I'm a lonely woman."









Clockwise from main: the Club's Rebecca and Charles; formative works; oh-so-scary Muse; the soap never off Rebecca's Sky+ box; JoJo's 'Fuck you, Drake' song; Beyoncé and all the windy ladies

AMY BRAMMALL, JAMES LOOKER, ANDREW WHITTON, BBC

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

THE NME CHART

1	40	PAUL WELLER 'WHEN YOUR GARDEN'S OVERGROWN' *Island*	
2	17	SPECTOR 'CELESTINE' *Polydor*	
3	18	ARCTIC MONKEYS 'R U MINE?' *Domino*	
4	5	HOWLER 'THIS ONE'S DIFFERENT' *Rough Trade*	
5	1	DRY THE RIVER 'NEW CEREMONY' *RCA*	
6	2	FRANK TURNER 'I STILL BELIEVE' *Xtra Mile*	
7	NEW	BAND OF SKULLS 'SWEET SOUR' *Electric Blues*	
8	19	NOEL GALLAGHER'S HIGH FLYING BIRDS 'DREAM ON' *Sour Mash*	
9	10	MYSTERY JETS 'SOMEONE PURER' *Rough Trade*	
10	11	TWIN ATLANTIC 'MAKE A BEAST OF MYSELF' *Red Bull*	
11	4	MILES KANE 'FIRST OF MY KIND' *Columbia*	
12	15	ALABAMA SHAKES 'HOLD ON' *Rough Trade*	
13	9	KASABIAN 'MAN OF SIMPLE PLEASURES' *Columbia*	
14	3	HOT CHIP 'NIGHT & DAY' *Domino*	
15	7	TRIBES 'CORNER OF AN ENGLISH FIELD' *Island*	
16	16	THE BLACK KEYS 'DEAD AND GONE' *Warners*	
17	20	THE HORRORS 'CHANGING THE RAIN' *XL*	
18	6	JACK WHITE 'SIXTEEN SALTINES' *Third Man*	
19	13	BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB 'HOW CAN YOU SWALLOW SO MUCH SLEEP' *Island*	
20	12	THE CRIBS 'COME ON, BE A NO-ONE' *Wichita*	

The NME Chart is compiled each week by NME Radio and is based on how many times each track has been played on the station over the previous seven days.

NME RADIO

Hear the chart rundown first every Monday at 7pm on NME Radio
NME.COM/RADIO

NME.COM

Listen to the Top 40 and learn more about each artist online
7PM EVERY MONDAY AT NME.COM/CHART

NEW TO NME RADIO PLAYLIST

- **PASSION PIT** 'Take A Walk'
- **BIGKIDS** 'Superhero'
- **THE MILK** 'Every Time We Fight'

RETINA, PIETER M VAN HATTEM

BEHIND NME LINES

EXCREMENT IN A BOX

Back in '91, if you gave a band a "crappy" album review, you had to deal with the consequences, says ***Andrew Collins***

When I arrived at *NME* in the late '80s, Stuff Writers Got Sent was a legendary subsection of the paper's folklore. Songwriters of the '70s Chinn and Chapman were fabled to have delivered a box of offal after an unfavourable review of a Suzi Quatro record; office ranter, the late Steven Wells, received an axe through the post from Bono as a symbolic entreaty to "bury the hatchet". I was, in October 1991, proud to enter those annals, when The Levellers sent me shit in a box.

They were understandably aggrieved about the mark out of 10 I gave their second album, 'Levelling The Land' – three, since you ask, an honest reflection of the fact that I didn't like it very much, albeit spiked by a general distrust of the anarchy-style circles around the 'A's on their lyric sheet and more instinctive distrust of a band that were building a fanbase without any help from us. I didn't like the look of them in their gardening jumpers, detected pretence in their wood-cut logo and suspected that their alternative lifestyle was something to do in their gap year.

> ***My address was written left-handed to avoid detection***

I'm not proud of my dismissal of what is actually a sturdy folk-rock exercise that's no more a stranger to tunes than it is to stomping; nor am I proud of the writing itself. I outed The Levellers as "art-hippy poshos" who used "river metaphors and bad grammar to convince us that [*The Good Life* comedy cast] Tom and Barbara Good had it right", and wrote off their "rebellion" as "humourless dropping out".

I would like to state that I did listen to the record a number of times, something The Levellers subsequently accused me in print of not doing. (*NME*'s Stuart Maconie is my witness – he was round my flat the night I listened to it.) Either way, on publication the following week, bassist Jeremy took it upon himself to use his right to reply in a scatological fashion. Backstage at the Norwich Waterfront, he prepared a personal response, hastily gift-wrapped it and popped it in the post.

Pre-email, the *NME* mail sack was a poisoned chalice. It contained free records (hooray), crayoned readers' letters (boo) and, on this day in history, a parcel postmarked "Norwich", enclosed in cheap, torn, decorative paper, addressed to me in a remedial scrawl. (Jeremy had written it left-handed to avoid detection.) I smelt a rat. I picked it up at arm's length. I shook it in the spirit of Christmas morning and it gave a dull rattle. Perhaps it was a rat. I ceremonially escorted it from *NME* premises and dumped it in a bin by the lifts.

The culprit owned up to our arch-rivals and next door neighbours *Melody Maker*, reasoning that if a band defaecates in a box as a statement and the recipient doesn't open it, have they really made a statement at all?

Disgusted, *NME* closed ranks on The Levellers and vowed never to put their name in the paper again, a boycott that continued for seven months, until they had a hit in May 1992 and we felt they'd suffered enough.

As a postscript, the band asked me to pen the sleevenotes to a 2007 reissue of 'Levelling The Land', which served as a peace treaty. They didn't, however, ask for a mark out of 10.

THE LEVELLERS
Levelling The Land
(Chinacat/All Formats)

IT WAS all fields round here when The Levellers were kids. In fact, it still is, in their somewhat misty-eyed, nostalgic world. Folk, cavalier to a man and evidently the kind of band for whom compost holds a magical allure, The Levellers should not be confused with other art school shouters Levellers 5, or van drivers' wet dream Levellers 42.

The Levellers actually come from breezy, cosmopolitan, ruggling mecca Brighton, but this upmarket base is utterly belied by lyrics which are stuck fairly and squarely in Runnymede, and songs indebted to Fiddler's Dram. They are art-hippy poshos, using turbo-charged folk clubstand-bys, thudding rock bass, river metaphors and bad grammar ("I seen") to convince us that Tom and Barbara Good had it right, and The Man is someone who oppresses us by building houses for us to live in.

Sure, this album's keystone number, erm, 'Battle Of The Beanfield' (!) is about how "heavy" it is to beat well-meaning comedy people up for conversing on a henge which belongs to, like, everybody, but this is ruined by mentioning the A303 just in case you didn't get the symbolism.

The Levellers manage to take the folky bits of The Wonder Stuff which should be rubbish but aren't and make them rubbish again. New Model Army must take part of the blame, too, especially as long-time benefactors. But even they never sing "If I could choose the life I pleased/Then I would be a boatman" ("The Boatman").

Student balls will probably be the Levellers' to play with forever, and their earthy pot-to-print artwork will inevitably attract the squattrust crowd in Town & Country-filling droves, but don't mistake their humourless dropping out for rebellion, drawing a circle round all the 'A's on your CD-lyric booklet won't cut much mustard on the streets come judgement day. A dog on a

Andrew Collins

That shit-stirring review in NME, October 1991

RADAR

THE ANNUAL SEASIDE BASH WAS AWASH WITH SHIT-KICKING NEW BANDS. HERE'S OUR FAVOURITE – AND MADDEST – DOZEN

GREAT ESCAPE *Special*

Edited by Matt Wilkinson

▲ MILK MUSIC
THE BEACH
SATURDAY 3PM
Shocker #1 about Milk Music: sod the grunge and SST comparisons – the Olympia, Washington fourpiece open their pierside set with six incredible new songs that sound nothing like Wipers, instead recalling everything from Thin Lizzy to Neil Young. Shocker #2: they drop in fan fave 'Beyond Living' – which they said they'd dropped – sending everyone loopy. Shocker #3: we now know it's not even their best song...

Start getting excited. Last weekend, Brighton's piers, pubs, beaches and backstreets were overrun by some of the best bands we've seen in years. All of these were brand new acts. Many were still unsigned. Some, in fact, were so goddamn unknown they were playing their first ever gigs there. To put it bluntly, we had something confirmed to us at the Great Escape that we've been suspecting for a good while now: that there's a thrillingly madcap bunch of diverse, genius bands out there who are sick of being bubbling-under newbies and are dead-set on becoming fully fledged, shitkicking world-beaters. With a little luck, of course.

We're talking about Milk Music – in the UK for the next fortnight continuing their first ever tour here. We're talking about their fellow Yank invaders Haim and Bass Drum Of Death. We're talking about your future favourite homegrown heroes AlunaGeorge, Peace and Palma Violets. We're talking about Aussie mentalists Pond and... ah, fuck it, we're talking about countless others. It's impossible to pick one overall hit of the festival, which is why we've rounded up as many of them as we could here. That's not all either – head to *NME.COM/radar* now for more coverage, pictures and live footage...

▲ PALMA VIOLETS

STICKY MIKE'S FROG BAR SUNDAY 2AM

Along with Haim, these Londoners are probably the buzziest new band of the festival this year. We get three shows from them in total, with each one heaving. This is the pick of the bunch, and the words 'brilliantly ramshackle' could barely do it justice – instead, it's rock'n'roll in its purest, drunkest form: a 2am ragaround that ends with singer Sam Fryer diving headfirst into the drumkit before doing a runner out of the venue.

▲ POND

THE PIER THURSDAY 5:30PM

The Australian fivepiece have to deal with irate estate agents threatening to call the police due to the chaos caused when they rip open the tiny, sweat-drenched and absurdly named Mrs Fitzherberts bar early on Thursday, so we take them straight to Brighton Pier afterwards to indulge in some douchebag tourist posing.

◀ VIOLET

THE HAUNT

THURSDAY 8PM

Pixie Geldof takes centre stage in Violet. Recounting tales of heartache, she looks vulnerable and demure, switching from hushed coos to soulful croons reminiscent of Nancy Sinatra. Shocked? You will be.

▶ CITIZENS!

CORN EXCHANGE

FRIDAY 9:45PM

Citizens! do their damndest to turn the Corn Exchange into a heaving mass of lusting bodies. They succeed too, with 'Let's Go All The Way' sparking make-out sessions galore. When singer Tom Burke slinks up onto the drum riser during '(I'm In Love With Your) Girlfriend' and laments "*I always want the things that I can't have*", things only get more intense...

WORDS: MATT WILKINSON, RHIAN DALY
PHOTOS: TOM MARTIN, RICHARD JOHNSON, DAN DENNISON

HAIM ▶

THE PIER FRIDAY 2PM

It feels as if all of Brighton have checked out Haim this weekend. Like *The Virgin Suicides* sisters if they'd formed a band instead of topping themselves, they specialise in breezy, all-American chic with glimmers of Fleetwood Mac, Beth Gibbons and '60s flower power.

▲ BASS DRUM OF DEATH

THE HOPE THURSDAY 10:15PM

Sweat drips from the ceiling as the Mississippi duo rip through prime cuts from their 2011 debut 'GB City'. This is bratty garage punk at its finest, all snarling riffs and hair-whipping attitude packaged in spring-loaded energy.

MADEON ▶

CORN EXCHANGE SATURDAY 10:30PM

Seventeen-year-old French producer Madeon mixes original material with cuts from the big guns (Jay-Z, M83). As he conducts the crowd, it looks like he's having the time of his life.

◀ DROP OUT VENUS

THE PROMENADE SATURDAY 4PM

The thing about these increasingly unpredictable south Londoners is that you never know whether they're gonna end up kicking each other's heads in onstage, kicking your head in, or trying it on with you. During their live show at Horatio's Bar, we get a mix of all three, with singer Iva Moskovich and guitarist Zaek Nakrivo constantly squaring up to each other. It's all held together by drummer Ursula Russell – and even offstage the trio are as electrifying as they are unnerving.

▲ SAVAGES

CORN EXCHANGE THURSDAY 9:30PM

Tonight's show in the cavernous hall of the Corn Exchange proves Savages can own venues 20 times the size of the East London pubs they've been playing thus far. Singer Jehn's ice-cold stare is as piercing as ever as she charges 'Shut Up' with effortless, brooding intensity.

▼ PEACE

THE MARINA SATURDAY 1PM

Not many bands start and finish their set on the same song but then, Peace don't do rules. They played 'Follow Baby' about 30 times over the weekend, and then went all Duran Duran by hiring a speedboat and partying with, er, Fred Macpherson.

▲ ALUNAGEORGE

COALITION FRIDAY 11:30PM

Within about two seconds of Aluna Francis and George Reid dropping their classic-in-the-making 'You Know You Like It', the audience is won over by their seductive, sultry and wholly mesmerising presence. The art of owning the stage has rarely been so captivating.

Pool dude: Joey relaxes in LA, 1977

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JOEY RAMONE

*They said he'd amount to nothing; instead he changed rock'n'roll forever. As **Joey Ramone**'s second posthumous album is released, **Barry Nicolson** hears his story from friends, family and bandmates*

So much of what the Ramones originated – the leather jackets, torn jeans and tattered Converse; their reduction of rock'n'roll to its base particles – has become *de rigeur* for the bands that followed, it would be easy to take them for granted. Without them, there would be no Vaccines, Strokes, Nirvana, Clash... no nothing, probably, that wasn't wearing wizards' sleeves and testing the boundaries of taste with indulgent keyboard solos. Others always reaped the benefits, but the Ramones changed everything.

But before he became punk's most totemic personality, before he was a barefoot teenage hippie hanging out in the coffee houses of Greenwich Village, before he developed the inhibiting emotional and anxiety disorders that plagued him throughout his life, even before the adolescent growth spurt that made him a gangling figure of fun for the local neighbourhood bullies, Joey Ramone was Jeff Hyman: a happy, outgoing and courageous kid from the middle-class Queens, NY suburb of Forest Hills. His life, although filled with tragedy, was far from tragic. Indeed, it's the most improbably uplifting tale rock'n'roll has to offer.

In the slightly incongruous setting of the BMG offices in midtown Manhattan, with platinum discs belonging to John Legend and The Black Eyed Peas hanging on the wall, Mickey Leigh remembers his older brother as "being young and free from any kinds of worries or problems. We were discovering rock'n'roll, and binding together through that. We were so enthralled and excited by this new world that we'd found. The first record we bought was Lesley Gore's 'It's My Party'. Every week, we'd go and buy another one – Lou Christie's 'Two Faces Have I', Dion's 'The Wanderer', Bobby 'Boris' Pickett's 'Monster Mash'. We had our little box of 45s that kept growing and growing..."

Joey had many 'bruddas', but Jeff had only one. Three years separated Jeff and Mickey, but nothing else could. They shared a bedroom and a worldview, one which the first song of Joey's second posthumous solo album, '...Ya Know?', encapsulates beautifully: 'Rock'N'Roll Is The Answer'.

It had to be, because Joey wasn't short of problems. His battle against adversity was underway even before he left his mother's womb. On the day he was born, May 19, 1951, doctors found a sacrococcygeal teratoma – a baseball-sized tumour formed from the mass of an undeveloped foetus – on the base of his spine. Its location, and the necessity to operate before it became malignant, meant that scarring of the spinal tissue – and the resulting neurological problems it would eventually trigger – was unavoidable. It was only the first of many maladies, but he never became a martyr to any of them.

"JOEY WAS AN ODD CREATURE. LIKE A LIFE-SIZE MARIONETTE"
ARTURO VEGA

To Mickey, Joey was a "typical, protective big brother". That dynamic changed as they got older and their parents divorced, with Joey gradually retreating into himself while Mickey developed into a model son. Their mother encouraged artistic self-expression, but their father was frustrated by Joey's long hair, his weird clothes and his disdain for the Vietnam War. He wanted Joey to toughen up by joining the military. "That," smiles Mickey, "just wasn't on the cards."

By 1966, Joey had started hanging out with the beatniks and hippies in Greenwich Village, but that was of less concern to his family than the changes he was going through at home: he would wear the same outfit for weeks at a time, leave a mess wherever he went, and became fixated with carrying out tiny, meaningless rituals.

"He'd turn light switches on and off, get in and out of bed, let the water run for hours," Mickey recalls. "It became a big problem. My mom took him to several doctors and they'd say, 'He's gonna be a vegetable, he can't function on his own and you're gonna have to take care of him for the rest of his life.'"

Today, he would swiftly be diagnosed with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, and his illness would be managed. But OCD didn't exist in 1967. Adolescence was tough enough for Joey, who had grown so tall and skinny that he became a lightning rod for childhood cruelty. But he knew how to deal with that. His OCD was something no-one understood. The uncertainty of what it was, and the things it drove him to do ▶

– including pulling a knife on his mother during one fit of frustration – were terrifying. Finally, in 1971, he took the step of checking himself into the psychiatric ward of St Vincent's Hospital for a two-week evaluation.

"He had emotional problems," says Mickey. "He'd hear voices in his head, telling him, 'You need to do this again, you didn't do it correctly' or saying, 'You're no good, you can't do anything right'. He couldn't control it, and it was scaring him. He'd go into these rages because he didn't know what was happening. He wanted to do something, because he was afraid and he wanted help. He was having suicidal thoughts, and that scared him enough to check into St Vincent's."

After leaving the hospital, Jeff Hyman was looking to transform, and in 1972 there was no greater transformative power than glam rock. He donned a black jumpsuit, bought a pair of fringed lilac boots and became Jeff Starship, frontman with Sniper, a local glitter-punk group in the mould of New York Dolls. In the words of Arturo Vega – the man who designed the iconic Ramones seal and attended all but two of their 2,263 shows – Jeff may have been shy, "but he never lacked confidence. He was Jeff Starship! He wore metallic jumpsuits and platform boots! I'm not sure how [in the Ramones' early days] they managed to put him on drums, because that wasn't him. I'm sure he was sitting back there thinking, 'This sucks!'"

But Sniper soon kicked him out, and in later years Joey was sensitive about his Jeff Starship persona. "He thought maybe people might ridicule him," says Mickey. "But all the Ramones were into that stuff. At their first show, Johnny was wearing silver lamé pants."

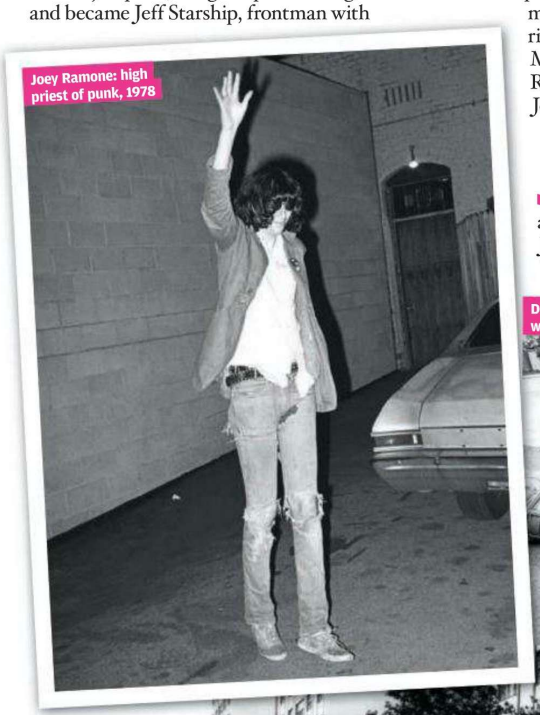
"JOHNNY WAS A BULLY. HE NEVER HAD ANY RESPECT FOR JOEY"

MICKEY LEIGH

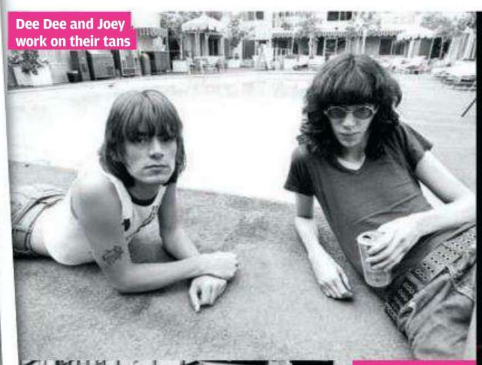
John Cummings (Johnny), Doug Colvin (Dee Dee) and Thomas Erdelyi (Tommy) all grew up in Forest Hills. The Ramones were born in early 1974 after Johnny lost his job and decided to form a band. Joey was the drummer, with Dee Dee on vocals and Tommy in a managerial role. When they discovered that Dee Dee couldn't sing and play bass at the same time, Tommy suggested Joey take over. When none of the drummers they subsequently auditioned could keep up with the searing speed they played at, Tommy became a fully-fledged member.

They weren't friends, but allies. Their relationship, as Arturo Vega explains, was based on "the kind of loyalty you develop with the guys in your neighbourhood when you're very young. You may be very different, but they're your buddies from the block. The Ramones didn't invent punk rock because they set out to; they did it because they couldn't help it. Dee Dee thought he was writing songs like the Bay City Rollers and Joey thought he was writing songs like The Beach Boys."

Two years before the release of their seminal debut album that would go on to change the face of punk (although it stiffed in the charts), Vega attended their first show, at Performance Studios in New York on March 30, 1974. He already knew Dee Dee, but was instantly struck by Joey – a "fascinating, odd creature. He was something almost... grotesque. He was so tall, like a life-size marionette. And he had this very small, very beautiful face. He was enchanting."



Joey Ramone: high priest of punk, 1978



Dee Dee and Joey work on their tans

Johnny, Joey, Dee Dee and Tommy at home in Forest Hills, New York, 1975

Joey and Dee Dee soon moved into Vega's loft, right around the corner from CBGB, which in those days wasn't yet punk's illustrious birthplace, but a shabby Hell's Angels bar whose floor was covered in sawdust and dogshit. Joey's OCD and slobbish habits had long since driven his mother up the wall. But Vega remembers his time with Joey fondly: "Joey wasn't a freak. He wasn't 'weird'. He never did anything that wasn't completely normal – for a Ramone. I remember late one night, Joey said to me, 'Ya know what I like about living with you, Arturo? You treat me like I'm somebody else'. People always treated him with a certain condescendence or disdain, but I didn't. He was a sloppy kid, and sometimes I would yell at him, or I would help him, but never in a condescending way."

If only Johnny had been the same. At odds with Joey's liberal leanings, he publicly backed George W Bush in 2002. Back in the band days, he carried around a KKK card to unnerve people. He was a non-ironic admirer of Charles Manson. Any dictator's last line of defence is always that they made the trains run on time – well, Johnny made the Ramones run on time. But as the band took off and their schedule became more hectic, Joey was perceived as an obstacle to that efficiency.

Tommy rationalised Joey's poor hygiene and chronic lack of punctuality by recognising that "the band was composed of eccentric people, so Joey's OCD was part of the fabric", but Johnny had little patience for this, or his political stance. As Johnny's guitar tech, Mickey witnessed this first hand: "The guy was so proud of being a bully. The first thing I read in his autobiography was about how the band were supposed to meet up to go to the movies, but Joey was late, so when he turned up, John punched him in the face. John never had much respect for Joey. He saw himself as the leader of the band, but the focus had turned towards Joey, and that bothered him tremendously."

If Johnny wanted something, he took it. And in 1982, when he decided he wanted Joey's girlfriend, Linda Danielle, there was only going to be one outcome. That Johnny and Linda were deeply in love didn't lessen Joey's devastation. It was like being back in the playground, only now he was getting intimidated out of more than just his lunch money – by his own bandmate.

"They never spoke to each other again," confirms Vega. "But it didn't affect the band: loyalty to the Ramones was absolute. Joey had a couple of different relationships after that, but he and Linda stayed in touch until the very end. That was something nobody knew. Linda would call me [to see how Joey was doing in hospital] and sometimes she would call Joey as well. Other times, I would bring flowers to him from Linda. But nobody could know who sent them."

During the 1979 recording of fifth album 'End Of The Century', Phil Spector fawned over Joey, to the extent that, as Mickey puts it, "everybody got the feeling that Phil really just wanted to make the first Joey Ramone solo album". The band's touring ▶

Joey's primitive autocue, onstage in Michigan, 1978

RAMONE by RAMONE

A who's who of the ever-shifting Ramones line-up

The original line-up (l-r): Johnny, Dee Dee, Tommy, Joey

JOEY
VOCALS *(1974-96)*
The singer is immortalised in New York with a street named after him. But in true punk spirit, 'Joey Ramone Place' is one of the most commonly stolen signs in the city.

TOMMY
DRUMS *(1974-78)*
The last surviving member of the original band, Tommy was integral to their success and penned their hits 'I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend' and 'Blitzkrieg Bop', as well as co-producing their first three albums.

JOHNNY
GUITAR *(1974-96)*
The guitarist once claimed that all "punk rock is right wing". He died in 2004 aged 55, following a five-year battle with prostate cancer.

DEE DEE
BASS *(1974-89)*
A founding member of the group, Dee Dee left the band for an ill-fated rap career as Dee Dee King. He died of a heroin overdose in 2002.

CJ
BASS *(1989-96)*

Joined the band following Dee Dee's departure. He claims he was asked to join Metallica – twice – in 2001, but turned them down to care for his autistic son.

ELVIS
DRUMS
(August 28-29, 1987)

The original drummer with Blondie, Elvis 'Clem Burke' Ramone was unceremoniously booted out after playing only two shows. He couldn't keep time with the rest of the band, apparently.

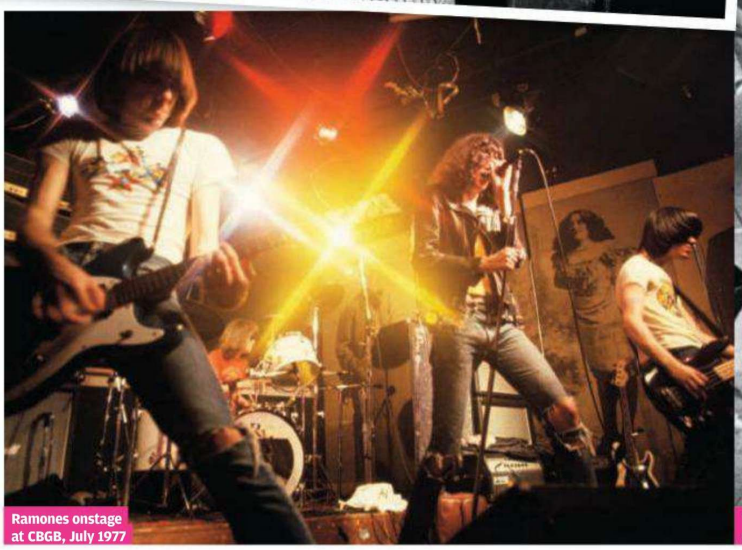
RICHIE
DRUMS *(1983-87)*

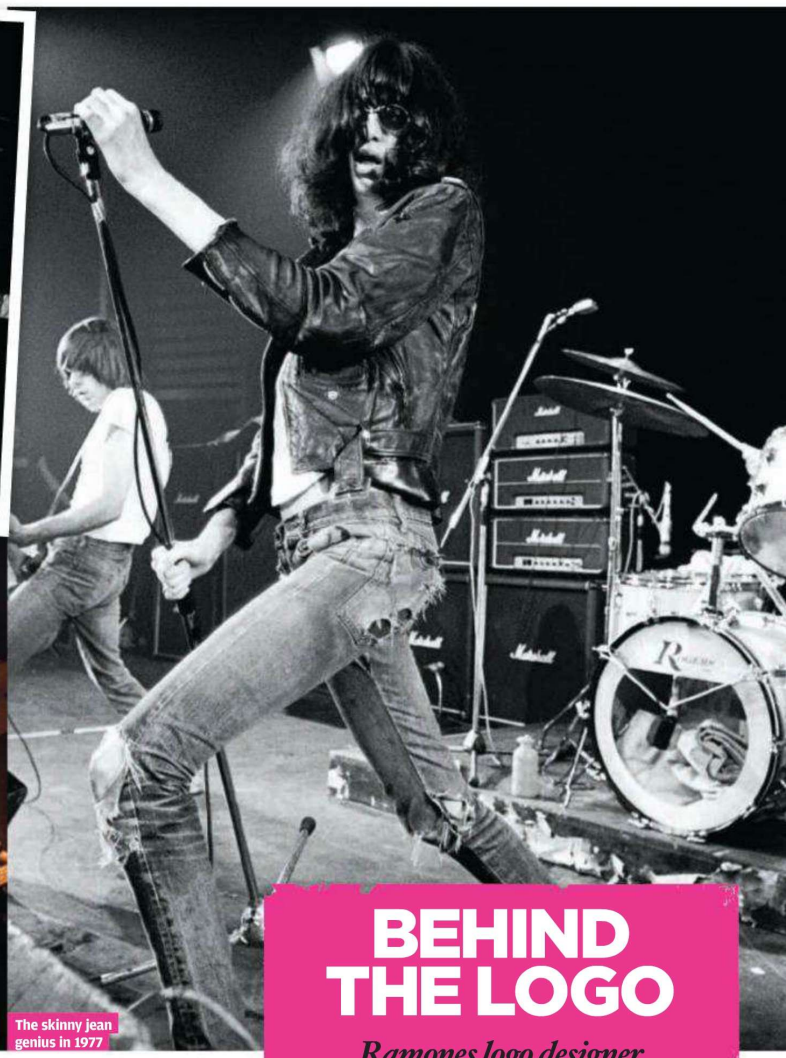
In 2007, Richie sued three download sites along with those associated with the band, for copyright infringement. He lost the case but won rights to the songs he had written.

MARKY
DRUMS
(1978-83 and 1987-96)

During his spell away from the band in the mid '80s, Marky took on various blue-collar jobs to keep him occupied. He worked as a messenger boy, a demolition man and claims to have put up wrought-iron fences in New York crack dens.

Merv, CBGB's cat, could run, but he couldn't hide


Ramones onstage at CBGB, July 1977


The skinny jean genius in 1977

commitments were gruelling and everyone – Joey included – was disappointed by their inability to sell records. Now he and Johnny couldn't even exchange basic pleasantries. So, what kept Joey in the Ramones?

"They had something great, and they knew it," says Mickey. "They wanted to keep it going for as long as they could, despite having this total contempt for each other. But that kind of stress and anger, and having to try and hide it from the public, wasn't good for either of them."

Leaving the Ramones was out of the question, but Joey needed some sort of release from the toxic atmosphere in the band. Richie Stotts, former guitarist with Plasmatics – and co-writer of 'Rock'N'Roll Is The Answer' – was one of those he turned to.

"Joey loved to drink beer," laughs Stotts. "I mean, some people will have a beer, but they don't necessarily enjoy drinking it. We used to drive around New York in my pick-up truck, drinking beers and tossing the empty bottles in the bed of the truck. You'd end up in jail for that now, but nobody cared in 1985. Our relationship was based on not talking about the Ramones. The band wore on him, and he enjoyed getting away from it."

As Joey told *Uncut* in 1999, "I was always an experimentative person. In the '60s, that's what it was all about." He had dabbled with drugs as a teenager in the village, but in the mid-'80s, he developed an unexpected fondness for cocaine. Somewhat ironically, during this time, drummer Marky, who had replaced Tommy in 1978, was sacked for alcoholism. And Mickey – whose own band The Rattlers were finally starting to make some headway – noticed his brother becoming worryingly paranoid and embittered.

"Everybody was doing coke," he says, "including Joey. He had started drinking a lot. He became nervous that I might become successful. I was the one getting the pats on the back when he was the problem child. The tables turned, and he liked it that way. He thought that if I became successful, things might go back to the way they were."

In January 1990, Joey fell offstage wasted at the Wetlands club in New York and tore his ankle ligaments. It was the incident that, he said, "made me see the light. In the '80s I was starting to party a little too much. I got into certain drugs late. After I broke up with Linda, for some reason I could get high on cocaine, and I started to like it."

Joey was diagnosed with lymphoma in 1994. His bandmates were shockingly unconcerned ("I still hear people don't die of lymphoma," Johnny grumbled years later), but by that stage the Ramones were on their last legs anyway. They played their final show in August 1996.

Joey finally started work on a solo album with producer Daniel Rey, but progress slowed as he dealt with his illness. He was beating it, too: in December 2000, doctors were ready to declare his lymphoma in remission, but he broke his hip, was forced to discontinue chemotherapy and sank into terminal decline.

BEHIND THE LOGO

Ramones logo designer Arturo Vega on 'that' design

"I hated the fact that the Ramones were depicted as cartoons. I wanted to design something that would portray them as being as powerful and all-American as I saw them. When we were in Washington in October '76, we saw the presidential seal and I thought, 'This is it'.

"I changed a few things: instead of the arrows I put a baseball bat, because it was Johnny's favourite sport and America's national pastime, and instead of the olive branch, I put an apple branch, because I wanted it to be as American as apple pie.

"We started making the T-shirts because the record company didn't want to pay my travel expenses, so I said, 'Let's make some shirts.' Johnny said, 'Whaddyamean? Who the hell is gonna buy a Ramones T-shirt?' For a number of years the only money they saw was T-shirt money!"

The Ramones logo is now a, er, Brand

Hayley is a punk rocker

Ramones in 1978 with second drummer Marky (second from left)

During his stay in hospital, Joey was inundated with visits from old friends, celebrity fans and well-wishers, but with the exception of Tommy, not one of his old 'bruddas' bothered to call. "He never spoke about it," says Mickey, "but it must have been disappointing and hurtful to him."

"I spoke to Joey at length on the phone shortly before he passed away," Tommy remembers. "I wanted to bond with him, but he was always so competitive with me. He did not understand that I had my own eccentricities, which he mistook for me being distant. I think he was surprised by the fact that I was one of the true friends that he had."

"He always thought he was going to survive," says a tearful Arturo Vega. "Three days before he died, he was refusing to be fed through the tubes in his throat because he didn't want to damage his vocal chords! He was a fighter. And that's what I hear when I listen to his two solo records. It's victory music. Just... total victory."

Joey died on April 15, 2001. He was 49 years old. Though he never lived to see the Ramones inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall of Fame in 2002, the knowledge that they would be meant the world to him. By the end, he was satisfied that, even though the band lost every commercial battle they ever fought, they had won the war: "We're the greatest rock'n'roll band in the world," he said in 1984. "We're the only band that kept the guts, and kept the excitement, and kept the belief. We never sidetracked."

"He had some resentment for bands who had become so commercially successful by using the Ramones' formula, like Green Day," admits Mickey. "But that's not an uncommon thing for prototype bands, the people who began something. They're often surpassed by the others that follow. But their influence is undeniable. It prevails, to this day."

> **"WE WERE THE ONLY BAND WHO KEPT THE GUTS, THE BELIEF"**
>
> **JOEY RAMONE**

Joey Ramone's flame has many keepers. He was beloved by everyone from Bono to Bob Dylan. He was punk rock: an inspiration to anyone who's ever been told that they're no good, that they didn't fit in, or that they'd never amount to anything. "Rock'n'roll literally saved Joey's life," says Vega. "It was the anchor he grabbed onto to survive." That debt was repaid, and then some. Life made him fight for every small morsel of fulfilment it yielded. But in the end, it was a gas.

NME.COM *Listen to a stream of Joey Ramone's new album '...Ya Know?' in its entirety at NME.COM now*

GETTY, BOB GRUEN, CAMERA PRESS/ROBERT MATHEU, DENIS O'REGAN/CORBIS, JOE STEVENS

NME VERDICT

JOEY RAMONE
...YA KNOW? BMG

You might argue that the Ramones – any of 'em, or collectively – aren't really an "album of previously unheard material" kind of band. Joey Ramone in particular doesn't seem like the sort of guy who'd be sat about fleshing out ultimately unreleasable ideas for days on end with whichever musicians were around him at the time. Then you get to the tracklist of '...Ya Know?': it opens with 'Rock'N'Roll Is The Answer', finishes with 'Life's A Gas' and features a 'New York City' in the middle just for good measure.

Yup, for sure, this is a rock'n'roll album, sung by Joey Ramone. The guitars are loud and fast, the delivery laconic yet razor sharp, the lyrics dripping with sarcasm and romance in equal measure. 'Waiting For That Railroad' is slower, the alternative version of 'Merry Christmas (I Don't Want To Fight Tonight)' is... a weird inclusion, but the rest of it sticks resolutely to the script. Loads and loads of great people – from Steve Van Zandt to Joan Jett to Lenny Kaye to various Ramones – have lent a hand, and the result is a beautiful, fun, exhilarating record that couldn't sound less cobbled together. *Hamish MacBain*

8

DOWNLOAD: 'Coming Up With The Sun'

THE THEORY OF RELATIVITY

From years obsessed with grunge to making one of 2012's hottest debuts, sister duo 2:54 use their almost psychic bond to beguiling effect, finds Leonie Cooper

PHOTO: DAN DENNISON

"It's exciting... and *terrifying*," begins 2:54's guitar shaman Hannah Thurlow. She's talking about the impending release of her and her big sister Colette's self-titled debut album, out May 28.

Dense, and with a dark edge of threat, '2:54' is a deeply atmospheric collection of pulsing rock. Rooted in the gloomier end of shoegaze, it flashes with rapturous darkwave and is born of the near psychic bond that exists between Hannah and Colette, who layers intricate melodies over her sibling's strapping drum and guitar foundations.

We meet the pair in the dressing room of The Echo in Los Angeles during their first run of shows in the United States. Over ice-cold cans of beer, they huddle together as they reflect on the album sessions at the residential Monnow Valley Studio in Rockfield, Wales, and it becomes a little clearer why they're cautious about revealing themselves to the wider world.

"OUR SOUND IS BIG, VITAL, YET STILL FEMININE"
Colette Thurlow

"We wanted to try and translate the songs as we'd made them, which was secluded," says Hannah. So they holed up in the rural retreat. "We'd hoped for things to sound as big and as vital without losing any of the darkness or femininity," explains Colette. Engineer Alan Moulder, who's worked with The Jesus And Mary Chain, Nine Inch Nails and My Bloody Valentine, joined them to shape '2:54' into a graceful but ballsy record. "He makes things sound 3D, to the point where I feel like I'm shaking hands with one of Hannah's solos," says Colette. "It's completely enveloping."

Tonight's show is just as beefy, an impressive display of dexterity and passion. "Playing shows is a scary thing and it's not like we're high on confidence," Colette admits. Yet with the confrontational way she commands the stage she hides her trepidation well. Eyeballing the crowd, letting loose unapologetic Elvis sneers, she struts through the Pixies-ish bombast while Hannah summons sludgey licks from her guitar.

Though these are 2:54's debut gigs in the States, this isn't the Thurlows' first time in the country. "Before we were able to drink in America we saved up, bought our tickets to LA and there was a pilgrimage to 924 Gilman Street, to see what the craic was there, but immediately we kind of got kicked out," remembers Colette of their formative punk expedition.

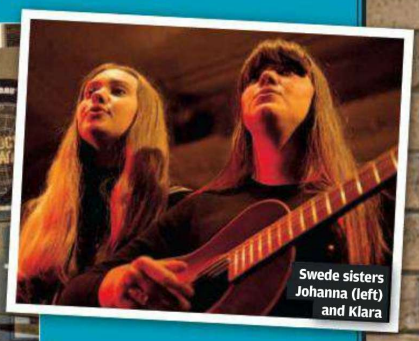
For those not familiar with that particular address, it's a fabled venue in Berkeley, near San Francisco, where the likes of Bikini Kill, Bad Religion and the Melvins honed their craft. As teenagers obsessed with Stateside grunge and guitar sounds, it was a musical Mecca. "At this point we didn't realise that everyone in America drove around. We walked for hours [to find it], through white picket fence after white picket fence," says Colette. "And by the side of a motorway..."

This shared love of hardcore is all well and good, but do they, we wonder, ever disagree on anything when it comes to their own music? It seems not. "I can, like... hear you in my head," says Colette to Hannah. "It's obviously sisterly..." "...intuition" they chime, grins plastered across their faces. Colette shrugs. "It's just for life."

VIVA SISTERS!

Our other favourite rock siblings, past and present

Kelley (left) and Kim. Deal or no deal?



Swede sisters Johanna (left) and Klara

KIM AND KELLEY DEAL
THE BREEDERS

Surely the most iconic of all the sisters in rock are the Ohio-born Deal twins, who turned 50 last year. When not being 10 shades of amazing in The Breeders, Kelley's a champion knitter. She took up the hobby in exchange for a rather more life-destroying kind of needle and released a book of patterns in a bid to help keep on the straight and narrow. Kim, who's the younger sister by 11 minutes, spends her time in some band called Pixies.

Tegan (left) and Sara loved posing with their giant strip of Plasticine

TEGAN AND SARA

The plugged-in folksy identical Quin twins shot back into the public eye last year after taking Tyler, The Creator to task over his homophobic lyrics. Writing on their blog, Sara said she found it "impossible not to comment" on his liberal use of the word 'faggot'. "Why should I care about this music or its 'brilliance' when the message is so repulsive and irresponsible?" she commented. A typically charming Tyler responded: "If Tegan and Sara need some hard dick, hit me up!" The pair are currently getting together their seventh album. Bets are that it won't be dedicated to Odd Future.

Eat your heart out, The Cribs. Here are The Shaggs

DOT, BETTY, HELEN AND RACHEL WIGGIN
THE SHAGGS

The Wiggin sisters are perhaps the finest, freakiest and most widely known example of outsider music. Put together by papa Wiggin in the late '60s on the advice of a psychic, the teenagers were taken out of school in order to immerse themselves in the project and craft their naive melodies. The result was rock'n'roll as reimagined by a go-go booted practical joker unaware of the differences between a guitar and a cabbage, or, as *Rolling Stone* put it: "a lobotomized Trapp Family". Long after they split, Frank Zappa and Kurt Cobain sang the praises of the band's baffling 1969 album 'The Philosophy Of The World'.

JOHANNA AND KLARA SODERBERG
FIRST AID KIT

The Söderberg sisters are favourites of not just Jack White and Mumford & Sons, both of whom are taking them out on tour, but Bright Eyes, who featured on their most recent album, 'The Lion's Roar'. Heck, even Samantha Cameron is a fan of the duo, making Scandi-folk small talk with Marcus Mumford about them at the White House earlier this year. The Swedish sisters also made the marvellous Patti Smith cry – in the best possible way – last year with a startling performance of her classic track 'Dancing Barefoot'.

JESSICA AND JENNIFER CLAVIN
BLEACHED

Coming on like the best bits of Fleetwood Mac – Stevie Nicks and Christine McVie, then – after a fuzzy DIY session in east London's vintage Toe Rag Studios, these California siblings have recently been on the road in the US with fellow washed-out new wavers Veronica Falls. The beach blonde sisters used to be part of the unhinged, clattery punk happening Mika Miko, who regularly reduced straight-edge Los Angeles punk venue The Smell to a sweaty heap of partying kids, high on little more than vegan carrot cake. Bleached might be a touch more refined, but they certainly aren't any less fun.

Life's a bleach for the Bleached sisters

In the end, Hannah (left) and Colette gave up waiting for the gas man

RETNA, GETTY

UNTHINC

MELODY

He's the crazily talented troubadour with a backstory to end all backstories. He also thinks he's a wizard. ***Matt Wilkinson*** *heads to Chicago to meet the one and only* ***Willis Earl Beal***

PHOTOS: PIETER M VAN HATTEM

Wearing biker boots so heavy they might crack the floorboards of his manager's Chicago basement flat, 27-year-old Willis Earl Beal stumbles messily to greet *NME*, then splutters something about having a throat infection. It's 2pm, and he's watching the Cohen brothers' movie *The Man Who Wasn't There* on DVD, having just landed from a transatlantic flight following three weeks on the road for his rabidly received debut European tour.

We've spoken to him twice before now. Once was on the phone (for his first interview after signing to XL label imprint Hot Charity last December), while the second was an altogether too brief handshake after his phenomenal debut UK show at London's Power Lunches venue, where he'd asked us repeatedly what we thought was bad about his performance and been unimpressed when we'd shrugged our shoulders and said – truthfully – nothing at all. Willis remembers neither, he says unapologetically.

He is dressed this afternoon as he always appears to be: dark sunglasses, workman Levi's, boots and a plain white T-shirt with the word 'NOBODY' etched harshly into it. He talks fast and is strikingly stark, often hitting on the same themes that define his music. His four deadly sins, if you will, are: depression, anger, loneliness and a heavy, heavy heart. Whether it's chatting sweetly about wanting to marry his girlfriend, or stating that he would "beat anyone who jumps onstage while I'm up there", he is several different personalities rolled into one.

It's not unsurprising, therefore, to discover that he's somewhat unhinged too. At his request, we almost end up taking an unplanned excursion "to go and see the squirrels" in a nearby park, while a simple question of how Willis is finding being a full-time musician ends with a statement: "When I was in my apartment [pre-signing] I would sit up and imagine myself as a famous person. I would interview myself. I'd talk in front of the mirror, I'd sing to crowds of people. Did all sorts of things. And it was real to me when I was doing it, because I was crazy enough and alone enough to pretend that it was real. I had so long to focus on becoming a musician that I think it lowered the level of randomness in the universe. And that's why I was able to leapfrog over all these other real talented people – because I'm a wizard."

"I LEAPFROGGED TALENTED PEOPLE 'COS I'M A WIZARD"
WILLIS EARL BEAL

Entirely straight-faced, he rounds off by saying: "It's not my talent. It's just that everyone's under some kind of spell, because everybody's in my dream. I tell my girlfriend this stuff and she's like, 'Willis, see, that's the reason why you got emotional problems...'." He says he prefers his way of thinking to his girlfriend's, and really, he's well within his rights to carry on doing it.

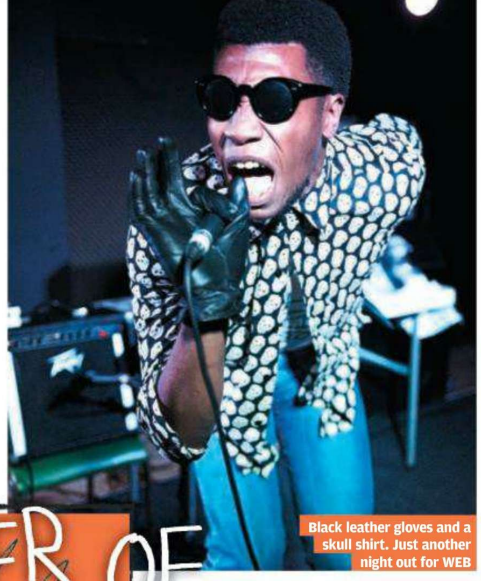
Born and raised in Chicago, his journey seems unfeasibly long compared with most new acts covered in *NME*, and has been peppered with moments of despair. In recent years it's taken him from the Windy City to Albuquerque, New Mexico and back again. Along the way he's fallen madly in love, written hundreds of songs without really being able to play any instruments, slept rough, tried and failed to fit in with the hipster music scene, joined the army, been discharged (complications with his intestines saw him hospitalised for months), and left copies of his music – along with hand-drawn pictures of himself and his phone number – lying around town with the specific intent of finding like-minded, lonely souls.

At first he succeeded, hooking in a few strangers, bloggers and musos, before catching the eye of a prominent Chicago journalist who then passed on his story to the XL affiliate who eventually signed him. One day last year, he even ended up trying out for a new TV talent show he'd seen being advertised called, um, *The X Factor USA*. His A-grade, God-given voice – triumphing in everything from hurricane howl to soothing falsetto – saw him sail through the preliminary stages, though not much further. His sole contribution to the actual show, in fact, is a three-minute-long introductory interview, on which he begins by saying: "The name is Willis Earl Beal, I am from Chicago, Illinois, and I've accumulated 27 years on the planet."

"What does it feel like to be here on the eve of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity?" Willis is asked. "I want some Del Taco," he replies. "That's how I feel."

He says this no differently to the way he tells us about his emotional difficulties. He's straight. He's childlike. He's honest. There's a light behind his eyes, and he's a fuckload more real than anybody – ever – has managed to be on any Simon Cowell-related production.

"I went through all the levels, and then finally I got in front of Simon and Cheryl Cole and LA Reid," Willis says. "And Simon told me to shut up 'cos I was, ▶


Black leather gloves and a skull shirt. Just another night out for WEB

LEADER OF THE PACK

Our lowdown on 2012's other solo eccentrics

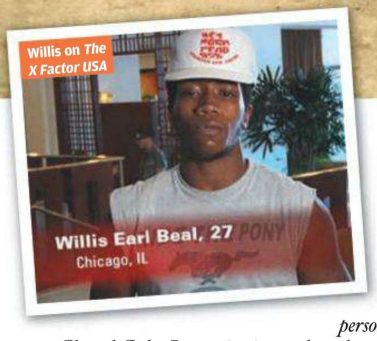
DIRTY BEACHES
Dressed like Brando in *The Wild Bunch* and with just as beguiling a backstory, Alex Zhang Hungtai specialises in intense r'n'r rumbles – like a 21st-century Link Wray.
***NME* VERDICT: The real deal**

COLD SPECKS
Canadian newbie Al Spx is more Morcheeba Unplugged than oddtime blues, but there's talent in that voice.
VERDICT: Jools Holland's fave

GABRIEL BRUCE
After his ex-garage outfit Loverman imploded, Gabriel chilled, listened to Leonard Cohen and found his calling.
VERDICT: London's weirdest new popster

FATHER JOHN MISTY
The former Fleet Foxes drummer can write a decent tune (check 'Hollywood Forever Cemetery Sings') but could do with laying off the Black Lips blues schtick a bit.
VERDICT: The great straggly hope of beard rock

WILLY MOON
"Willy's back with a new beat now", Mr Moon squeals on single 'Yeah Yeah'. He says this right after, er, drums that sound just like House Of Pain's 'Jump Around'.
VERDICT: Kinda absurd



like, blabbering. And Paula Abdul asked me if I could be trained, so I said, (*adopts sarcastic, dog-like persona*) 'Yeah!' Cheryl Cole, I was singing to her the whole time, I was looking right into her eyes, it helped my performance. And then Simon was like, 'You'd be an absolute nightmare to work with, but it's a nightmare I'm willing to have...' And it was good – they said I was going to Pasadena, California. And I was dressed like a bum, y'know? I had a tattered shirt. I think that was the reason why they were wondering if it was the right decision. I got four yes's, but then I got to California and fucked it off – ruined it."

Surrounded by a myriad of "shiny, happy people" competing against him in the Bootcamp stage of the competition, Willis had his moment of clarity.

"I wanted to win that show. I thought I was going to win, believe it or not. I was talking to my grandma about it, saying, 'This is what I'm gonna do when I get onstage, I'm gonna sing an Iggy Pop song,' and y'know, we were discussing – we were realistically discussing what I was gonna do in the final competition. I would have done 'Search And Destroy'; I was gonna sing songs like that. I think people would have been blown away by it.

"But what happened was I ended up hiding away in the bathroom, 'cos they had all these people in one room, banging on the piano and doing twirls and shit. I'd smuggled some beer in and just got drunk in the toilet. By the time it was time for me to perform, it was 11pm and the judges were all really tired and I got up there and forgot the words and started swearing and... I had already given up."

"SIMON COWELL TOLD ME TO SHUT UP. I WAS BLABBERING"
WILLIS EARL BEAL

A few weeks later Willis was noticed by the XL stable and picked up – entirely out of sync with the world yet somehow fully formed. Not only did he have an incredible backstory, but he also came with hoards of scratchy, lo-fi demos from his Albuquerque days. A selection of these were released last month as Willis' first proper album, 'Acousmatic Sorcery', though he says he's long since outgrown them. Album number two, which he's recording at present and hopes to have out by December, will feature "brand new interpretations" of his older material alongside new tracks, all recorded in a proper studio. But Willis is worried about it. His preferred method of songwriting and recording (aka "making things up as I go along") appears completely at odds with what he thinks people – from his record label to his fans – are now expecting him to produce.

"Um, I think I'm gonna get out of writing songs," he informs us. "I'm not really sure... that may be a fucked-up idea since I just got a publishing deal."

Asked why, he trails off before allowing himself to answer properly. Instead, he starts clicking his fingers, as if to illustrate a Tin Pan Alley-style scenario of him being forced to churn out an endless supply of faceless hits. He'll later refer to 'Acousmatic Sorcery''s lead single (and, along with the sublime 'Monotony', the most affecting, effortless moment on the album) 'Evening's Kiss' as "that piece of shit", before declaring: "I can do nice little poppy songs – but I don't want to."

What he wants to do, he adds, is tap into the same ideals that inspired his favourite artists – Tom Waits, Cat Power and Captain Beefheart, among others. He brings up the idea of working with Portishead's Geoff Barrow before saying it both delights and scares him equally. As does the prospect of his burgeoning popularity, it would seem. Would he welcome wider success?

"Only because of the money. No, you know what, second thought, I kind of want to be respected. I want to make a living but massive, massive success is not what I need. I want to be able to do what I want to do – travel and stuff – but I don't need massive Lady Gaga success or Adele success. I don't want that at all. 'Cos then you can't really live your life, and what you've done is you've lost something. You have money at your disposal, but I'd fucking kill myself. I'd drink every day, gorge myself on food and it wouldn't be nice."

As before, Willis is saying this without any hint of over-dramatisation. You can't not take him seriously, of course. But he's a difficult man to disagree with, because of the honesty with which he speaks – whether it's about wizards, Simon Cowell or, indeed, suicide. Talking with him is oddly calming – like being in the eye of the storm. "I'm just a squirrel, just trying to get a nut," he tells us. As the Cohen brothers' film credits roll we decide Willis is the man who's *always* been there – you just need to look out for him.

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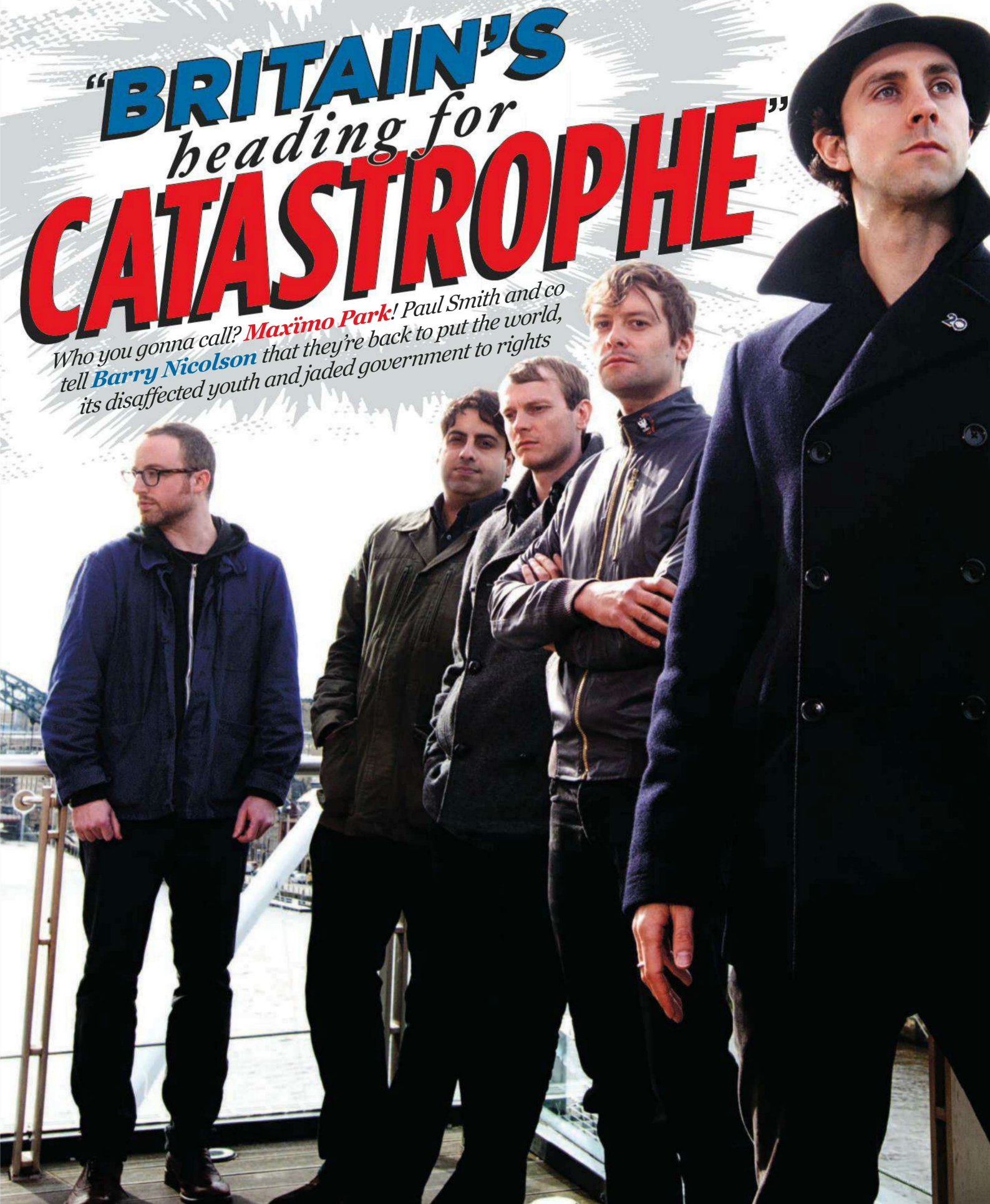
"BRITAIN'S heading for CATASTROPHE"

Who you gonna call? ***Maxïmo Park****! Paul Smith and co tell* ***Barry Nicolson*** *that they're back to put the world, its disaffected youth and jaded government to rights*



In a white-walled installation space at Gateshead's Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, a rotating cast of volunteers sit at a desk in the centre of the room and recite, in chronological order, every single year from 998,031 BC to 1,001,995 AD, with only the occasional sip of water for respite.

Conceived by Japanese artist On Kawara, 'One Million Years' is a piece designed to make its audience think about the passage of time, and to put the endless tumult of human history into some sort of perspective. They're a few hundred thousand years off yet, but when they eventually reach the late 20th and early 21st centuries, all of the seismic, axis-shifting events that *NME* thought defined our lifetime – the fall of the Berlin Wall, the September 11 attacks, the global financial crisis – will be reduced to a few seconds' worth of impassionately delivered syllables from an art school student's mouth.

In the cafeteria at the other end of the hallway, however, Maxïmo Park frontman Paul Smith's thoughts are very much on the here and now. Today, we suspect, Smith's ever-present visual signature – a crisp, jet-black trilby hat – is not worn for any particular aesthetic purpose, but rather to keep a lid on the roiling anger and confusion with which his head is filled.

"What is going on?!" he exclaims.

Maxïmo power (l-r): Duncan Lloyd, Archis Tiku, Tom English, Lukas Wooller, Paul Smith

Paul Smith knows the landing is gonna be painful

"What's happening in this country where polite society still exists, yet there are all these horrible undercurrents that are plain to see? You switch on the TV and people like Jeremy Kyle and Matthew Wright are peddling a soft form of hatred. I was walking down a sidestreet in Newcastle that I walk down pretty much every day, except on this particular day there had been an EDL march happening and someone barged me into the shop hoardings. For a supposedly developed society, there's so much suburban horror that goes on. That, to me, can only lead to some sort of catastrophe."

This, it turns out, is what 'The National Health', Maxïmo Park's incoming fourth album, is all about. In case you hadn't noticed, we're now living in Broken Britain: an international backwater slowly atrophying into madness, where civil liberties erode and the national mood blackens while the public concerns itself with the particulars of David Cameron's last Cornish pasty. Whole swathes of society are disaffected and disenfranchised by a coalition government nobody voted for, while the institutions that once made us the envy of the world are being broken up and sold off by Oxbridge-educated knaves. The once-great British public are now unemployed, angry and bereft of hope. These are, in Paul Smith's words, "the civilised end times". 'The National Health' is Maxïmo Park's answer.

The title of the album – announced alongside an intriguing statement from Smith about the nation spiralling "out of control" and railing against the bombardment of "bouncy, happy music" in a time of global recession – raises a number of questions, most pertinently of all: have Maxïmo Park, bookish chroniclers of indie-disco sexual inadequacy, 'gone political'? Fortunately, after a three-year absence, the band are as verbose as ever. When we casually mention that 'The National Health' seems an awfully provocative name for an album these days, Paul talks about it – uninterrupted – for 15 minutes.

"We didn't want it to go under anyone's radar," he smiles wryly. "But it's not a pinpoint criticism of, let's say, privatising the NHS, which is obviously a bad thing. The best political songs are the ones that don't have a slogan in them, like 'Shipbuilding' by Elvis Costello, the ones that are about what's going on in people's lives. You won't hear any of our songs going, 'Ban The Bomb' or 'War Is Bad', because those statements are obvious to anyone with half a brain. Certain things are more explicit on this album, but that's down to a progression in the songwriting rather than us just deciding, 'Right. It's time to say what we feel.'"

If you've heard the album's incendiary, rabble-rousing title track you'll know 'The National Health' refers not to the recent dismantling of the NHS, but to a wider national malady. As Paul puts it, "The phrase made me think of sticking a thermometer in the country and taking its temperature. Everything we write about is under the shadow of the times, and this album is very much linked in to the national mood, this global recession that we're going through. The song goes, "*The daily grind/The moral wealth/The family binds by means of stealth*" and those are the things that are on every man's mind. It's about the frustration that builds up with everyday life."

"THESE ARE THE CIVILISED END TIMES"
PAUL SMITH

Broadly speaking, 'The National Health' is more of a social portrait than a soapbox polemic. On the surface, many of the songs seem more overtly concerned with sexual politics (a common Maxïmo Park pursuit) than any other sort, but they're all played out against the backdrop of an England that's "in a constant state of flux in terms of what to be". One song, the industrial-sounding 'Banlieue' (the French word for suburb) climaxes with the howled warning of "*Here come the animals*!", while Smith describes the title track as giving the rest of the album "a shape and a context". Could he be more specific, we wonder?

"'Banlieue' touches on the pervading sense that all is not well," he replies. "I find people from all across the social spectrum – whether it's the upper classes, the middle classes or the lower classes – are disaffected right now. It's like they're not in tune with society; they don't care, they don't belong. It's almost a nihilistic point of view. There's also this idea of a single British identity, which I would tend to disagree with. For me, although people are always talking about their idea of Englishness, it's a massively diverse thing. Should it be what John Major said, cricket and lukewarm tea, the knock of cork on willow? Lots of folk might think that's a beautiful thing. Then you hear people saying, 'Look at those kids in baseball caps, that's not very British, is it?' But you try telling Dizzee Rascal that he's not British!"

These are noble burdens for a humble band to bear – and Plan B aside, it's not as if others are lining up to shoulder them in the mainstream – but ultimately, it's all for nothing if the music itself isn't up to scratch. Everything we've heard so far suggests that won't be the case: 'The National Health' has an urgent, first-album directness and immediacy to it ▶

ANDY WILLSHER, WIREIMAGE, MANY THANKS TO BALTIC

that was absent from 'Quicken The Heart', their muddled 2009 album (Smith half-sarcastically describes it as "groove-based").

That album, their third in four years, came at the end of a period keyboard player Lukas Wooller likens to "being on a conveyor belt. We all needed to take a step back from the band as far as possible, without splitting up." It ended up selling quite well, but complacency and fatigue were beginning to creep in – artistically, mentally and physically. Drummer Tom English recalls that "touring was getting tiresome. We were playing shows where we were massively jetlagged and not giving our overseas fans the same respect we would if we were playing down the road and we'd just rolled out of bed."

"I felt like I was becoming jaded," agrees Smith. "When we got off that last tour, we just said, 'Let's stop this for a while.' We could've gone out and earned more money by playing to the same people, but we'd have been ripping them off. When you look back at the three albums we made, how regimented we were about going into the studio with the stuff that we had, we realised we needed to break the cycle, otherwise that would be it, and we'd just become AN Other band who people take for granted. And I don't want anybody to ever take our band for granted. When people listen to our records I want them to feel the same excitement and energy we put into it. But if you're knackered after seven years of going around the world, if you don't take a break from it, then that becomes a possibility."

Smith went off to record a solo album, 'Margins', and the band briefly reconvened in 2010 to score a new soundtrack for the 1928 silent classic *The Man Who Laughs*. When they eventually started talking about ideas for a fourth album, far from addressing societal ills or jamming a thermometer up the nation's anus, the brief they set themselves was refreshingly simple: "We wanted to make a pop record," says Smith. "I still think pop can be transformational. I think it can be funny and intelligent. I think it can be art. And when we looked back at the things we'd done, our strongest songs have always been crammed with hooks. So our job on this record was for all five of us to come up with as many great hooks as possible."

"IT'S A DOMESTIC DRAMA"

Paul Smith on 'The National Health' highlights

WRITE THIS DOWN

"It's a true story about a girl who once showed me her diary, and I was in it quite a lot. Initially, it was as though she was besotted with me, but her subsequent behaviour was, er, not equal to that initial premise."

RELUCTANT LOVE

"It's probably the most tender moment on the record, musically and lyrically. It felt like one of the key songs on the album. It felt effortless to write. It's a very romantic song. It's from that tradition of Maxïmo Park songs like 'Going Missing' or 'Books From Boxes'."

THE UNDERCURRENTS

"It's a domestic drama about the point where you've been living with somebody for a couple of years and something goes wrong, but you both need to stick together. It's about finding a moment of redemption in a troubled situation."

HIPS AND LIPS

"It's about two people at loggerheads. It builds up from an electronic pulse, to something I never thought I'd say about a Maxïmo Park song: it's got quite an 'industrial' chorus. It gets a bit Trent Reznor in the middle!"

THE NATIONAL HEALTH

"It's a frenetic, melodic, aggressive dissection of the frustrations of ordinary life and needing an outlet for it. The chorus is the outlet, the release. To me, I can hear a bit of Hüsker Dü in there."

Halfway over the bridge, Maxïmo Park decided on a new direction

The band seem relaxed about the time they've taken off. Nevertheless, these are uncertain times for Maxïmo Park; their contract with Warp expired after 'Quicken The Heart', and 'The National Health' will be their first release on V2 Records. Many of the artsy, angular contemporaries they rose to prominence alongside in the mid-noughties – bands like Bloc Party and Franz Ferdinand – have appeared rudderless and inertia-stricken of late, while others, like northeast neighbours The Futureheads, have struggled to hold onto their audience. But then, underestimating Maxïmo Park has always been a perilous business: they have a habit of bucking expectations.

"We're not a band for the sake of being a band," says Smith. "We've always done everything as well as we possibly could, and commercial expectations be damned. We want to make something that's genuinely uplifting, that'll make a difference to people's lives."

The volunteers at the other end of the hall, currently reading out from the upper 400,000 BCs, serve as a monotonous reminder that the notion of making a difference to anything is a Sisyphean folly, and that in the (very) long run, the social unrest and looming catastrophes that now seem so important and inescapable don't even amount to a drop in the ocean. But who the hell goes through life thinking like that? Maxïmo Park have made an album for the times we find ourselves in, for a palsied nation paralysed on its sickbed. The irony is, they've never sounded healthier.

"POP CAN BE INTELLIGENT. IT CAN BE ART"
PAUL SMITH

Head to NME.COM/reviews now for our verdict on the new Maxïmo Park track 'Hips And Lips'

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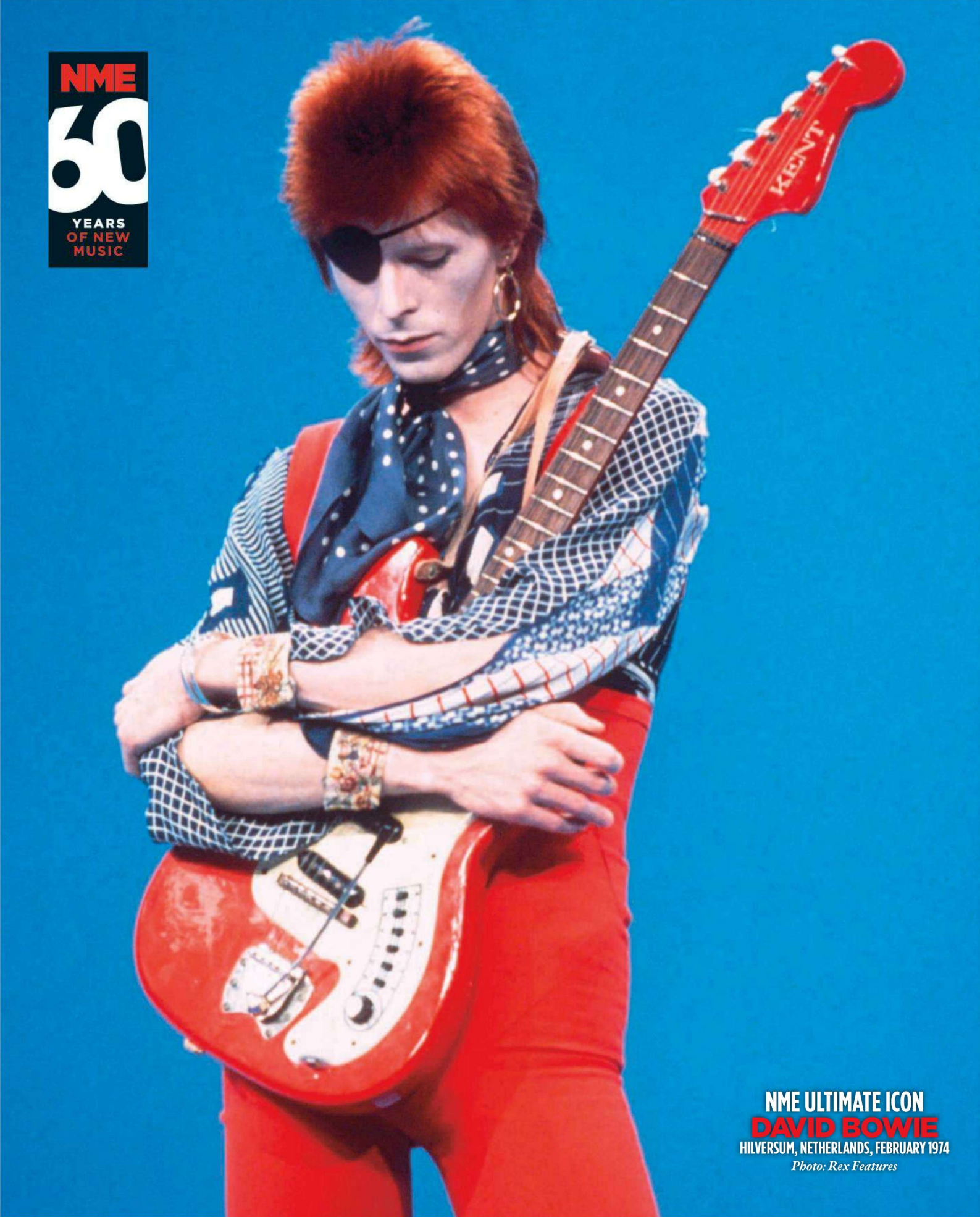
AMY WINEHOUSE
LONDON, OCTOBER 2006
Photo: Dean Chalkley/NME



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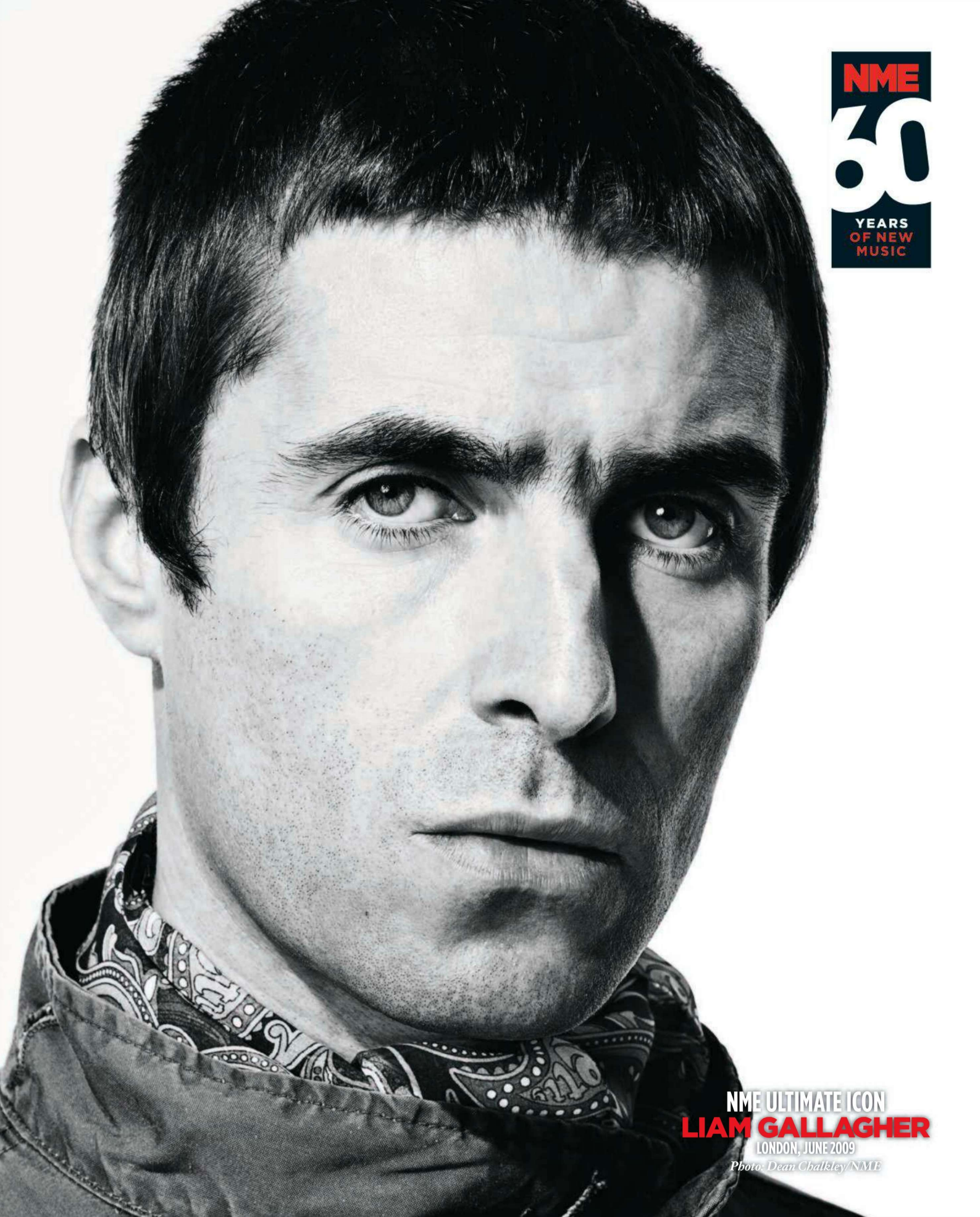
DAVID BOWIE
HILVERSUM, NETHERLANDS, FEBRUARY 1974
Photo: Rex Features

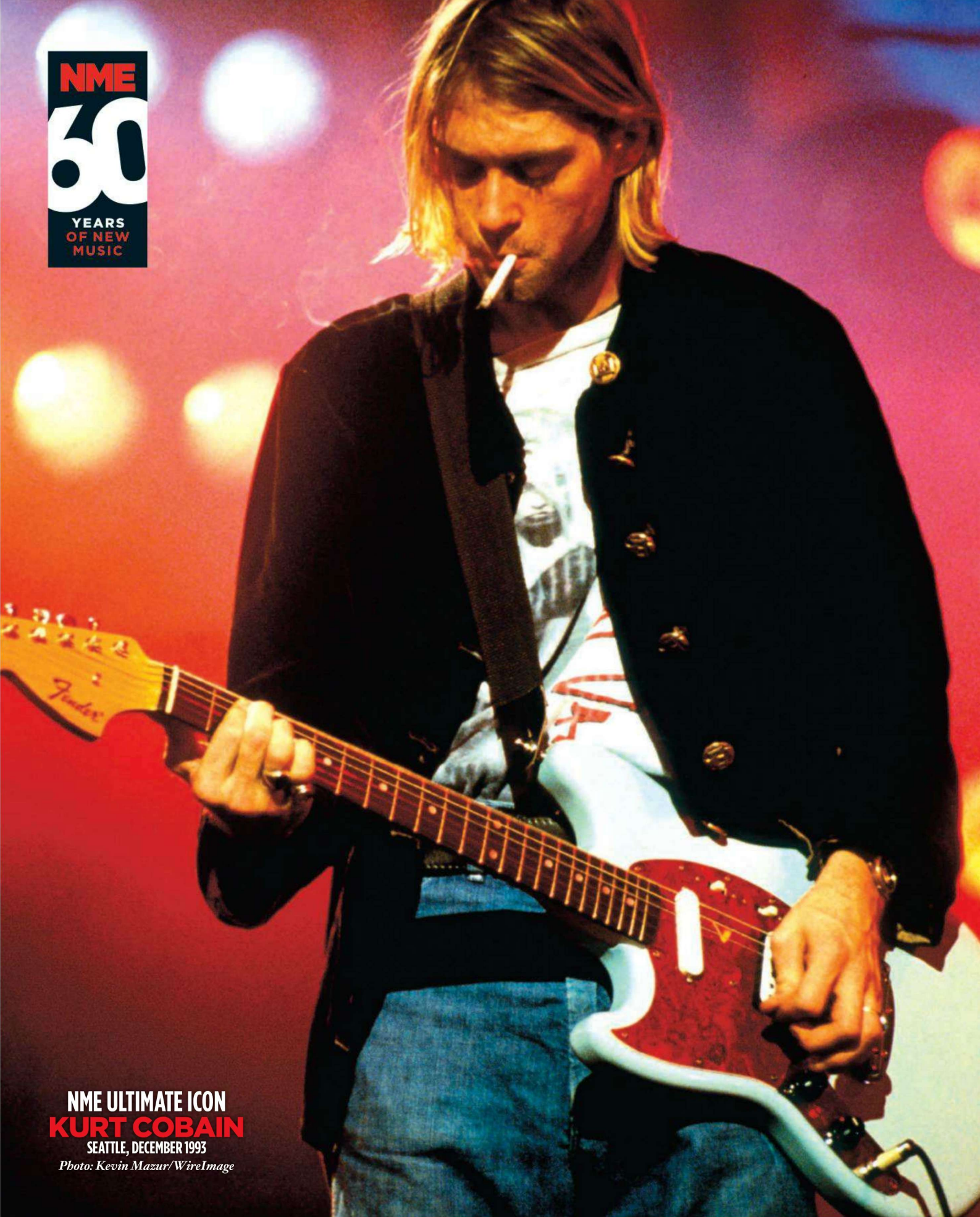


NME ULTIMATE ICON

LIAM GALLAGHER

LONDON, JUNE 2009

Photo: Dean Chalkley/NME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SEATTLE, DECEMBER 1993
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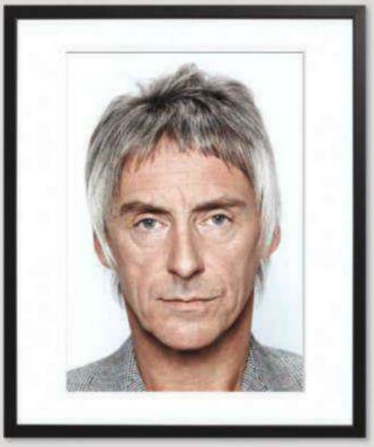

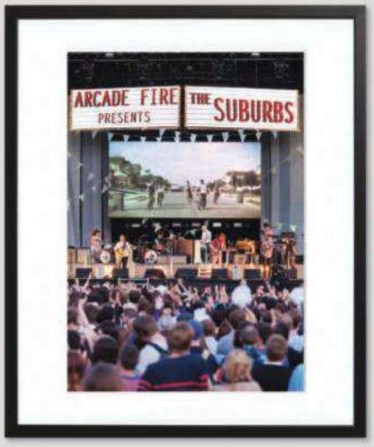

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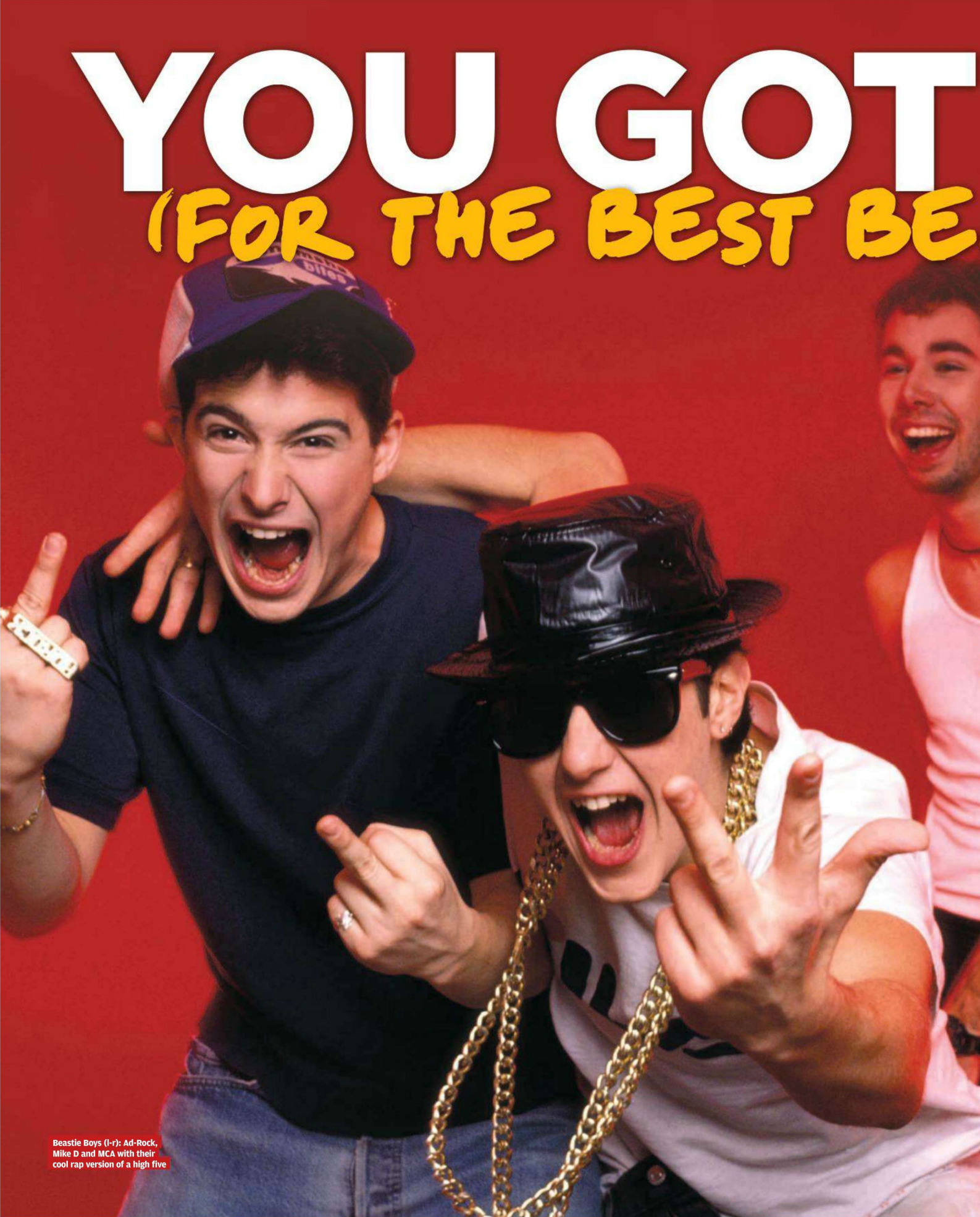


Beastie Boys (l-r): Ad-Rock, Mike D and MCA with their cool rap version of a high five

TA FIGHT
ASTIE BOYS ALBUM)

*Adam Yauch's tragic death earlier this month has got everyone digging out their **Beastie Boys** albums – and arguing over which is the best. Here NME staffers scrap it out over which of their records should be top of the pile*

Over the past week and a half, like much of the world, *NME* Towers has been blasting out Beastie Boys albums while raising a glass to the late Adam Yauch, aka MCA, who died on May 4. It's resulted in a lot of good memories. And even more arguments.

Agreeing on the best Beasties album is an impossible task – testament to their pedigree as well as their pioneering spirit. So to save further tantrums, we've got the team to put their cases forward for what they believe is the Beasties' finest moment. Have a read, then head to *NME.COM/blogs* to have your say.

LICENSED TO ILL (1986)

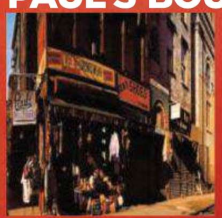
Hamish MacBain, Assistant Editor

To me, the Beasties will always be the band for Vans/backpack-with-both-straps-wearing knobs who take pride on how much more into hip-hop than you they are. No offence to the Beasties or what is actually not a bad album, but rule Number 64 of life is: if you are at a party and someone puts on 'Paul's Boutique' and rolls "a doobie", get the fuck out of there as soon as possible. Either that, or put 'Licensed To Ill' on.

Here's what will happen: aforementioned purist guy (ALWAYS a guy) will start talking about how the Beasties themselves hate it (they don't) and how it was just a joke at the expense of fratboys that got out of hand. Move away, because he will start on some unbelievably boring soliloquy about producer Rick Rubin's seminal fusion of rap/metal, then start sighing about the existence of Fred Durst, and bollock on making excuses about how 'Girls' isn't sexist, actually, it's making fun of people being sexist. Meanwhile, everyone else in the house/venue/morgue, whether they're a newborn baby, a pensioner or anything in between, will be carrying on like they're a teenager who has just got drunk for the first time. Only true masterpieces bottle the best feelings in life like this, and that is why the Beasties' debut will long outlive all their other work.

Best song: '(You Gotta) Fight For Your Right (To Party!)'

PAUL'S BOUTIQUE (1989)



Tom Howard, Reviews Editor

I came to the Beastie Boys late. As a '90s teenager who grew up listening to Oasis and Nirvana and who loved sitting in front of the TV watching the same tunes go round and round on MTV2, I was unprepared for the video to 'Intergalactic', the Beasties' 1998 single from 'Hello Nasty'. At the time I was ambivalent to hip-hop, but something about Ad-Rock, MCA and Mix Master Mike jumping about in white boiler suits with a giant robot hooked me in.

So I delved deep and got to 'Paul's Boutique', where I stayed. Not because it captured New York City in 1989 or anything (I'd missed all that), but because more than any album I'd obsessed over since Kurt Cobain's back catalogue, it showed me how to love music I'd previously never loved.

Via Cobain I got into Sonic Youth, Pixies, Iggy Pop. Via 'Paul's Boutique''s sample-led madness I was introduced to Chuck D, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, Pato Banton, Sly Stone and the Ramones, and shown the way to genius super-producers the RZA, Madlib and J Dilla, three of my all-time favourite dudes. Despite the absurd spring break bravado lyrics (which are smarter than Don Draper), 'Paul's Boutique' opened my mind to all forms of hip-hop. Plus: it's actually even better party music than 'Licensed To Ill'. BEER BONG!

Best song: 'Shadrach'

CHECK YOUR HEAD (1992)

Marian Paterson, Picture Director

In 1992, I was a teenage Walkman-addict, and my tape of this album took a hell of a battering. It was post-'Nevermind', and grunge was massive, but 'Check Your Head''s melding of whip-smart hip-hop and hardcore punk was far sharper, cooler, and actually heavier than all the Seattle music around at the time. For wannabe skaters and semi-professional stoners like me and my friends, nothing came close.

The audience for hip-hop in the UK has always been the preserve of posh suburban kids dressing like ghetto boys, but 'Check Your Head''s hard urban edgy scuzziness really felt like it was for the rest us and made sense to a Brummie girl like me. It made my long bus journeys across the city to school bearable.

Listening back to it now, it still knocks the rest of the band's albums into a cocked baseball cap. 'Gratitude' remains their hardest ever song, with MCA's fuzz-bass at a rib-shattering intensity. 'So What'cha Want' outdoes it though. It's by far the Beasties Boys' best song. It makes 'Intergalactic' sound like the theme tune to *Postman Pat*.

Following the little boy masturbatory wish-fulfillment that is 'Licensed To Ill', 'Check Your Head' showed just what a diverse bunch of styles the band could shift between, not just hardcore and hip-hop anymore, but funk, soul and even lounge music instrumentals. Crucially though, while on subsequent albums they explored these different styles and many more in greater depth, they were never as aggressive or ALIVE in doing that as on 'Check Your Head'. It's the sound of a band gleefully ripping the world apart. Pay no attention to the choices of the boring boys on these pages, have some balls and 'Check Your Head'.

Best song: 'So What'cha Want' ▶

From left: MCA, Mike D and Ad-Rock are yet to work out that vinyl won't play on a ghettoblaster in 1992

The boys at Switzerland's 1987 Montreux Golden Rose Festival

After fixing Reading Festival's boiler in 1998, MCA and co find themselves onstage

London's Waterloo Station gets the Beastie treatment in 1998

Waaay before *Shaun Of The Dead*, the Beasties go zombie for the camera in 1994

The giant inflatable penis marks the start of the 'Licensed To Ill' tour in 1987

ILL COMMUNICATION (1994)

Mike Williams, Deputy Editor

'Ill Communication' is not only the Beastie Boys' best album *by a fucking mile*, it's also the best hip-hop album of all time and a contender for best album ever, full stop. I'm serious. And here's why:

1) UM, 'SABOTAGE', ANYONE?

Forget the awesome video and concentrate on the track; *exactly* three minutes of peerless rap-rock that combines everything that made the Beastie Boys amazing – relentless rhymes, shit-hot musicianship and a geeky self-parody that lesser bands wouldn't have the balls to go near.

2) IT'S GOT THE BEST GUEST VOCAL EVER.

If anyone tells you that Jay-Z's feature on Kanye West's 'Monster' is hip-hop's best guest spot, they're an idiot. Pure and simple. The winner is Q-Tip for the semi-conscious and barely coherent ramble that underpins the classic 'Get It Together'. Clearly the work of a madman, he makes weirdo *Happy Days* references ("*got to do it like this like Chachi and Joanie*") sound like cultural timebombs. Genius.

3) IT'S A TOTAL PARTY RECORD.

Who needs 'Intergalactic' or '...Fight For Your Right...' when you've got 'Sure Shot' and 'Sabotage'? OK, I'm not convinced by this one either, but...

4) IT FEATURES CHANTING BUDDHIST MONKS!

MCA's raging Buddhism was approaching its peak in 1994 (he would later organise the Tibetan Freedom Concert in 1996 which over 100,000 people attended), so what did he do? Sample a load of monks and rap his worthy message over the top. The result is one of hip-hop's most far-out classics.

5) DID I MENTION 'SABOTAGE'?

Oh, I did? OK, well that's that sorted then.

Best song: 'Sabotage' (obviously)

AGLIO E OLIO (1995)

Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

Fuck the rap shit. At least, that's what the 13-year-old me said upon hearing this, the Beasties' 11-minute mid-period skate-punk breakout album.

Released solely as a microcosmic/frenetic energy burst just to prove they could rock better than the rest of mainstream America's punk elite – at that point made up of chartbusting shites like Pennywise and NOFX – it opened doors for me that led to the likes of Bad Brains and Minor Threat. Basically, the US punk stuff you didn't read about in magazines much back then. The *really* good stuff.

I remember listening to it over and over on a crappy big wheel in my hometown, while stoned out of my tiny teenage mind and loving it like I'd loved no other product from America before. I even remember appreciating pasta a whole lot more just because of the title. I downloaded it again last night and played it for the first time in years – it all came flooding back.

Best song: All 11 minutes of it

HELLO NASTY (1998)

Jamie Fullerton, Features Editor

In 1998, everyone thought the Beasties had peaked. They'd done the party-friendly debut. The pioneering second. The live-band departure. The chart-friendly hits. They'd been one of the biggest bands in the world. They were all in their mid-thirties and had nothing to prove. Then they released 'Hello Nasty'.

The album blew my mind as the sound of everything amazing about the band squished into one, with nothing lost in the splatter. It's got their weirdest, best hits – such as 'Intergalactic', with its insane robot-chatter chorus, actually way more anthemic than 'Sabotage' and '...Fight For Your Right...'. It's got DJ Mix Master Mike on turntable duties – reigning in mixtable wankery to provide subtle deck-work that never overshadowed the raw spitting of MCA, Ad-Rock and Mike D.

To me, this isn't about defining an era, or showing how Beasties progressed. It's just their best album. Full stop.

Best song: 'Three MCs And One DJ'

"WE WERE OFF OUR NUTS!"

Madness mouthpiece Suggs on partying with the Beasties

"IT WAS charming the first time Adam and co came to London in the early '80s. They were some fun and interesting cats. We were all fired off our fucking nuts so it's hard to remember anything specific about those days apart from jumping around and having fun. I remember hanging out in the studio in New York the first time we went to America too, when hip-hop was just starting. We learnt a bit from them, I don't know if they learnt from us – we'd throw a bit of calypso in and they'd throw in all manner of weirdness. Our paths crossed again over the years – I remember playing a gig with them in Athens where the entire stadium burnt down. Our music was different, but there was a shared ideology there – having fun and being anti-establishment. We shared irreverence and energy."

NME.COM *Head to NME.COM/blogs now to continue the argument and have your say on your favourite Beasties album*

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REVIEWS

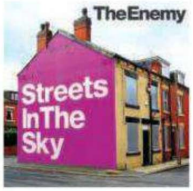
THE BIG OPINIONS ON THIS WEEK'S IMPORTANT RELEASES

Edited by Tom Howard

THE ENEMY

STREETS IN THE SKY COOKING VINYL

Still singing about terraces, still belting out choruses, still "borrowing" ideas... Tom's gang know these streets backwards



There was something almost laughably presumptuous about The Enemy's decision to call their second album 'Music For The People' in 2009. To recap: the Coventry band had just followed up their Weller-scented debut 'We'll Live And Die In These Towns' with a dud that fat-fingeredly 'borrowed' from the combined songbooks of The Clash, Led Zep and Blur, to name just a few, and sounded like the mashed-up contents of a year-long dedication to greatest hits compilations sicked up on a plate. Might 'Music By Other People' have been more appropriate under the circumstances? Most probably, but another misstep like *that* and they'd be calling their next record 'Music For One Person, Optimistically'. Swiftly followed by 'Taxi For Tom Clarke'.

Fortunately, The Enemy are smarter than some people would like to believe, and have 'fessed up that 'Music...' was an overly preachy misfire explained in part by rushed sessions that saw them knocking up material in the studio. 'Streets In The Sky', by contrast, was whittled down from more than 30 songs, and swaps the finger-wagging stuff for a more relaxed worldview: "We used to sing about how shit life was, now we just want to party," frontman Clarke told *NME* recently, pushing past us to get to the rum punch bowl.

But if that sounds like a cop-out in the face of mounting crisis, 'Streets In The Sky' (named after a documentary about a Sheffield council estate) is actually more a subtle shift in emphasis than a dramatic shift in tack. Indeed, the album's cover hints heavily at where they're headed: these are the same scruffbag terraces Clarke was writing about on the first record, certainly, but with a lick of bright paint that reflects a newfound optimism within the band.

The other surprise with 'Streets...' is its production by Joby Ford of hardcore wackjobs The Bronx, a fact which seems plenty significant listening to opener 'Gimme The Sign'. Sounding leaner and harder than before, the band take aim at a local would-be gangster ("*He's acting like he's Tupac/But he's never even seen a gun*") as guitars hit with sledgehammer force. 'Bigger Cages (Longer Chains)' applies similar blowtorch heat, sounding for all the world like old touring buddies the Manic Street Preachers in their prime. 'Saturday''s bracing terrace fodder finds solace as well as sadness in the treadmill nature of living for the weekend, with Clarke's soaraway vocal at the end brimming with the promise of escape.

'1-2-3-4' revisits the band's old habit of borderline plagiarism – it sounds *exactly* like Blondie's 'Maria' performed by a troupe of angry garden gnomes – but they bounce back with 'Like A Dancer', which could pass for The Killers with its earworm-y chorus. 'Come Into My World' recalls the Foo Fighters' bland heaviosity, and there's more bludgeoning to be had with 'Turn It On' and 'Make A Man', which sound like Supergrass if they held their ale a bit more stoically.

Clarke's newfound optimism pops up on '2 Kids" declaration that "*Life is good, better than they say/They can never take our memories away*", though the fact it sounds like 'Maggie May' sung down the local Yates's Wine Lodge is a boner-kill. On 'Get Up And Dance', he even invites us for a boogie – albeit with the subtlety of a crocodile dragging its screaming prey into a river – and 'This Is Real''s blue-collar romance is carried by a heartfelt vocal from Clarke that just about banishes the lurking ghost of Kelly Jones.

Odd misstep aside, though, The Enemy have never sounded more fully themselves than they do here. Knowingly faint praise that may be, but at least 'Streets In The Sky' has the two veg to make its meat-and-potatoes rock achieve some kind of lift-off. ***Alex Denney***

6

DOWNLOAD: 'Bigger Cages (Longer Chains)', 'Saturday', 'Like A Dancer'

ANDY WILLSHER

Ditching politics for partying

BOB DYLAN, 'HIGHWAY 61 REVISITED'

By 1965 Bob couldn't be arsed with anything as 'square' as protests, instead crooning droll surrealist smackdowns to hipsters and straight society alike.

DIZZEE RASCAL, 'TONGUE N' CHEEK'

Ditching his angsty persona, Dizzee's fourth album made him a star – even if it did sound like a cartoon hammer being taken to our balls.

RADIOHEAD, 'IN RAINBOWS'

Finally twigging that pre-millennial angst was so, er, pre-millennium, Radiohead made their sex album with 'In Rainbows', the 'Let's Get It On' to 'OK Computer''s 'What's Going On'.

THIS IS HARDSCORE
what our numbers add up to

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not-even-funny bad	Barely one saving grace	Actively terrible	Woefully bad or lazy	Depressingly substandard	Dead-on average	Better than average	Really good	Exceptionally good	Of-the-year good	Of-the-decade good

VIRALS
COMING UP WITH THE SUN EP
TOUGH LOVE

Third time lucky for Shaun Hencher? Virals finds the former Murder Of Rosa Luxemburg and Lovvers man ditching both the fretwanking and gutlord urch-punk of his former bands and embracing, wholeheartedly, slacker rock. The four tracks on this, his debut EP, are as sunkissed as they are beatific, and as a result it's easily the most instantly rewarding release he's ever put his name to. Opening track 'Coming Up With The Sun' is the best, and it's aptly titled too – sounding for all the world like the weed-infused utopia where Girls' last album and Brighton hopefuls Gross Magic meet. Elsewhere, the two-minute-long 'Shake It Up' just *is* 'Bandwagonesque'-era Teenage Fanclub, but played with twice as much urgency. It's still early days, of course – four tracks do not an album make – but with word that Shaun's already penned the full-length follow-up, we're thinking his future's looking rather exciting all of a sudden. ***Ashley Raphael***

8

DOWNLOAD: 'Coming Up With The Sun'

GAZ COOMBES
HERE COME THE BOMBS HOT FRUIT

In the Britpop race, Supergrass weren't so much the fat kids lagging at the back as the weirdos that ran in the wrong direction. It's easy to forget how good they actually were. With 'Here Come The Bombs', frontman Gaz Coombes does a surprisingly adept job of retaining the band's oddball pop sensibility, but shaping it into something that's, if not mature, then at least slightly less frivolously young and free. 'Simulator' bounces along on light-footed drum patterns with a big ol' glam stomp of a chorus, while the charmingly titled 'Whore' blitzes through on massive guitar lines and none-too-subtle lyricisms ("*Everybody is a whore/ Every fucker's getting sold out*"), yet there's restraint to be found between the wig-outs. 'Universal Cinema' makes for an impressive centrepiece, moving from delicately plucked guitar through a swirling psychedelic mid-section and back out again, while 'White Noise' soars, but with hazy subtlety. Grown Up Gaz is certainly more than just alright. ***Lisa Wright***

8

Download: 'Simulator'

COLD SPECKS
I PREDICT A GRACEFUL EXPULSION
MUTE

There is, of course, a great deal to be said for the virtues of a gleaming set of pipes, regurgitating their keeper's soul through a larynx so vast it could swallow black holes. But listening in on the quiet storm at the heart of Toronto's Cold Specks, namely mainlady Al Spx (an alias – she's undercover from her disapproving parents), you kind of feel you've been shortchanged. Not by its ambition – 'Blank Maps" refrain of "*I am, I am/A goddamn believer*" is bizarrely compelling, at once grand yet also gentle. Nor by the post-Arcade Fireisms all over the bare bones and The xx-evoking gospel of 'Winter Solstice'. And here is the authentic *feel* of Willis Earl Beal, yet lacking his clumsy but charming single-mindedness. If the focus on 'I Predict A Graceful Expulsion' is sharp then its scope is overly broad, focusing in on vague sentiments that leave you fond, but never in love. ***Jazz Monroe***

6

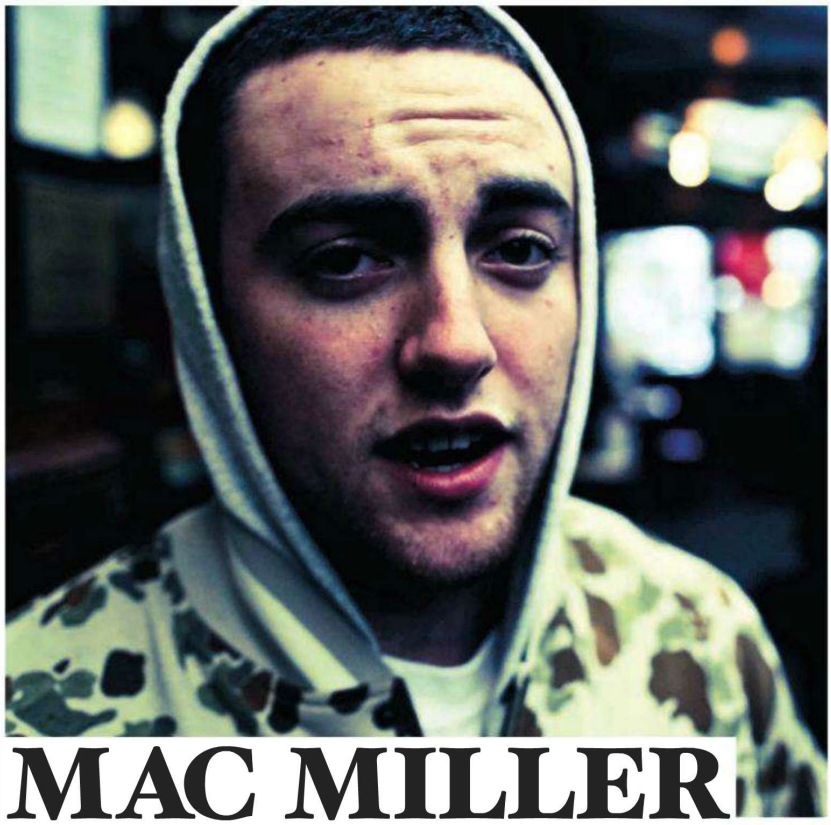
Download: 'Blank Maps'

Faces To Names...
What the reviewers are doing this week

JAZZ MONROE
"Stared out a raccoon, shared sushi with Kranky-signed chamber-pop heroes Felix, before taking cover from a Toronto thunderstorm in French violinist Yann Tiersen's tourbus."

JO FUERTES KNIGHT
"Inspired by listening to Juicy J, I tried making my own 'sizzurp' from Night Nurse and cream soda to cure my sniffles. Spent the next 48 hours asleep face down. Score!"

JAMIE FULLERTON
"Wondering if any album this year could possibly be as good as The Cribs' latest, and slowly recuperating after The Great Escape."



MAC MILLER

BLUE SLIDE PARK ISLAND

Out of the ordinary lyrically and sonically, Malcolm McCormick is finally rising from frat boy to big man

In hip-hop years, 20-year-old Malcolm 'Mac Miller' McCormick is practically old school. He's released one album and seven mixtapes since 2007. Then he was featured as part of a wet dream of hip-hop hopefuls alongside Yelawolf and Lil B on hip-hop magazine *XXL*'s Freshman list of 2011, certifying him as a baby-faced one to watch. He's come a long way since he released 'But My Mackin' Ain't Easy' at just 16 years old.

It's unsurprising, therefore, that 'Blue Slide Park' (named after a favourite childhood hangout of Miller's in Pittsburgh) is undercut with reflections on where Mac's been. Strangely this running theme forms one of the album's weaknesses, as he labours the suggestion that he's entering a new phase of life, a point clunkily illustrated on 'Loitering': "*I'm too old to be chilling at the playground*". The album's second weakness is Miller's 'frat rap', a style that occasionally rears its ugly, snapback cap-adorned head. His choice of cultural references – "*Donkey Kong*", "*Scott Pilgrim*", "*hashtags*" and the like – hint at horizons that have remained so far unbroadened, as does 'Party On 5th Ave', which includes the obligatory anthemic 'fun' sample from Marva Whitney's 'Unwind Yourself'.

Negatives aside, 'Blue Slide Park' is full of surprises, mostly in the production (helmed in the main by ID Labs, but also by A$AP Rocky favourite Clams Casino on 'One Last Thing'). It's layered with interesting sonic textures throughout, be they jolting injections of electronica or stoned-sounding, warped beats that lay the foundation for Miller's drawl. He raps lazily to laidback hooks, then attacks the bassier, sped-up moments with cocky wordplay. There are a few questionable deviations along the way – namely 'Up All Night' which sounds like a bad Ramones cover – but generally the production is so good you rarely notice Miller's exhausting overuse of the words "*dope*" and "*ill*". Alongside this, his ability to disorientate the listener is admirable, as he tackles important and playful subjects. Take his upfront reference to his Jewish heritage in 'PA Nights': "*We just tryna work so we can blow up like a Molotov/Thinkin' bout my people who was murdered in the Holocaust*". Or the 'did he just say that?' line on 'Of The Soul', one of the prettiest songs on the album, where fused with a lulling piano line, we hear his delightful take on oral sex: "*Put it in her mouth/Orthodontist*".

It's the contrast of the serious and the funny that lifts 'Blue Slide Park' from the tedious *American Pie* humour for which Mac Miller is often criticised, and the album as a whole saunters and bounces along. Miller has real talent beneath his spring break soundtrack, and with some life experience and some dictionary time, he could yet step up out of the park and start playing with the big boys. ***Kieran Yates***

7

DOWNLOAD: 'PA Nights', 'Frick Park Market', 'Of The Soul'

THE TEMPER TRAP

THE TEMPER TRAP INFECTIOUS

They have one good song and countless critics – and unfortunately their new album isn't gonna change that

In an *NME* feature in October 2009, Australia's The Temper Trap talked about how worried they were that their debut album 'Conditions' was a bit... wet, that their natural edge was chiselled away by producer Jim Abbiss (of 'Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not' fame). "We were a much louder band before this record," guitarist Lorenzo Sillitto told us.

The sad fact is, the quintet's debut gave them two-nights-at-the-KOKO success that was beyond anything they ever really deserved, and it wasn't because of the production techniques. It was the combination of the frequently stunning falsetto warble of singer Dougy Mandagi and, of course, the song 'Sweet Disposition'. Let's not be shy about it, it's a song so good it's managed to remain untarnished despite the fact it'll forever be intrinsically linked with multi-activity family holidays. And the only way The Temper Trap can trample notions of being one-hit wonders is with a second album that refuses to be squashed and squeezed into never-ending Coldplay-isms, as the first one was. A second album full of songs of 'Sweet Disposition''s quality would see Sillitto's wish for the band to be loud again come true.

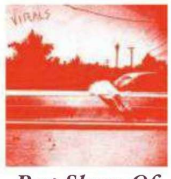
So what's happened? Well, they've talked a lot about their love of pasting '80s-style synths over everything in the build-up to 'The Temper Trap', but apart from the shimmering keyboards of 'Trembling Hands' it's barely noticeable. Inessential electronic sounds flop over songs such as opener 'Need Your Love' like unneeded napkins, never forming the spine of anything nor replacing the guitar lines. In doing so they expose a lack of confidence and ideas.

Most of the synth lines are simply less catchy variations of Bowie's 'Ashes To Ashes', which is a template so frequently lifted it barely registers today. The best (worst) example is on 'London's Burning', which is about the London riots and features audio samples straight from the mouth of a looter holding a plasma screen TV. On 'I'm Gonna Wait', they strive for 'Disintegration'-era The Cure throbs but end up sounding like White Lies. The one great moment is the sweeping 'Trembling Hands', which is shaped enough like Keane's equally amazing 'Bedshaped' to hold the attention.

But this is a vision-free second album that sounds like a band who have nothing close to 'Sweet Disposition' in their arsenal. Instead of bashing critics away with brilliant tunes, they find themselves defining faceless bluster-rock. People will use this music to criticise other music, because unfortunately for Lorenzo Sillitto, the band still haven't got any louder at all. ***Jamie Fullerton*** **5**

DOWNLOAD: 'Trembling Hands'

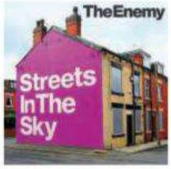
KEY NOTES



Best Sleeve Of The Week

Virals – Coming Up With The Sun EP

Sun-bleached and suitably old-school, this somehow makes a dead bird on a car bonnet actually look pretty.



Worst Sleeve Of The Week

The Enemy – Streets In The Sky

Looks like a T-Mobile advert on the side of a council flat. Weirdly, this combo ain't so picturesque.

SAINT ETIENNE

WORDS AND MUSIC BY SAINT ETIENNE COMMERCIAL MARKETING

Ever felt a connection to a group or a song so intense and completely one-sided that it defied and confounded all logic or reality? Of course you have, you're reading this magazine. That being the case, this record is the soundtrack to your life. Sure, the threesome's advancing years date the references ("*I was in love, and I knew he loved me back because he'd made me a tape*"), but the sentiment is unendingly adorable. And while Saint Etienne will always sound like Saint Etienne, these songs are their sharpest in over a decade. Sure enough, an album itself about the redemptive power of pop music deserves an emotive '8'. ***Dan Martin*** **8**

DOWNLOAD: 'I've Got Your Music'

EXITMUSIC

PASSAGE SECRETLY CANADIAN

United in matrimony and music, Brooklyn-based duo Devon Church and Aleksa Palladino embrace their Radiohead-inspired name in sound and sentiment. Their debut album proper quivers and quakes with the cinematic electronics and emotional abandonment of a soundtrack to Armageddon. But for all its bleak, dark fissures, bright and tender lights serenely burst out with hope. Opening title-track and 'The City' flicker like lit candles, before burning bright at their core of ruinous drums and Palladino's femme fatale vocal. 'The Modern Age' blossoms as a pop noir anthem, while the ruminating close of 'Sparks Of Light' sedates its final stirring throes. ***Thomas A Ward*** **7**

DOWNLOAD: 'The City'

SOULSAVERS

THE LIGHT THE DEAD SEE COOPERATIVE/V2

The idea came about when Soulsavers were hand-selected to support Depeche Mode on their 2009 tour – a dressing room "We should really..." chat that became reality. Dave Gahan (who provides all vocals here) and mainman Rich Machin have spoken about how much they have re-energised each other, and it shows. Initially it's strange to hear that instantly identifiable baritone clashing with organic, rough-edged guitars, dirty Hammond organ, and delicate strings rather than the cold electronics of the day job, but it soon reveals itself to be a perfect pairing. 'I Can't Stay', in particular, is absolutely beautiful. ***Hamish MacBain*** **8**

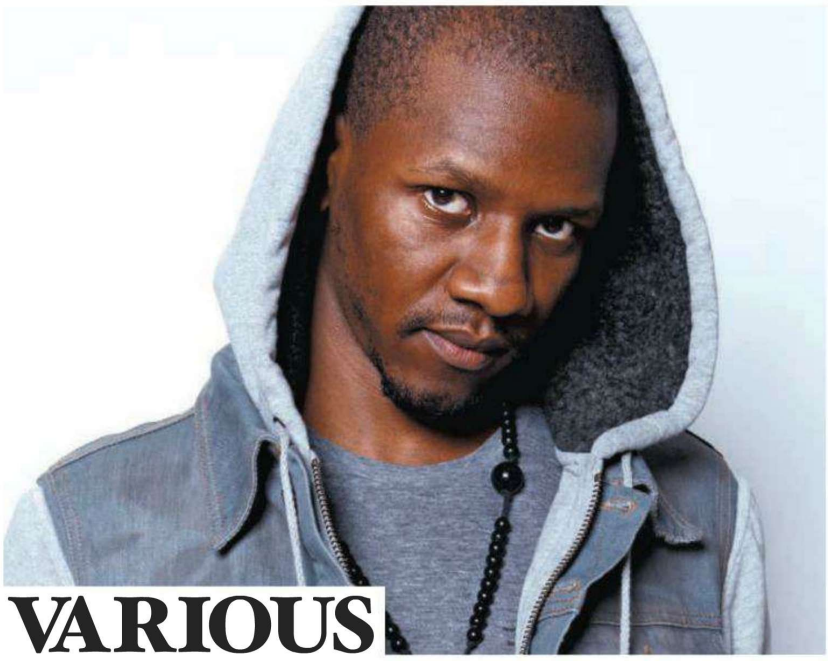
DOWNLOAD: 'I Can't Stay'

DEVIN

ROMANCING NO EVIL

Devin Therriault's one of those dudes whose music gets compared to all other music. Internetting (try it yourself!) will throw up the New York Dolls, Ramones, The Black Keys, Joan Jett, The Strokes, The Rolling Stones, Elvis Costello, The Stooges, The Smiths, Lou Reed... If his debut gets the Brooklyn boy anywhere near as far as any of that lot the 23-year-old will be able to afford plenty more Brylcreem for his monster quiff. And you know what, maybe he will. Because 'Romancing' is full of brash, *exciting* music that's as fun as doing The Big Shop with headphones in and is, therefore, highly recommended for anyone looking for something new to stomp to while buying carrots. ***Tom Howard*** **7**

DOWNLOAD: 'Born To Cry'



VARIOUS

THIS IS UK RAP VOL 1 DEFENDERS ENT

Looking for a dirty fat slab of hip-hop from this side of the Atlantic? Well this just isn't grimey enough

The problem with UK hip-hop is the 'UK' bit. I've never seen the logic in trying to compete with a genre that's so characteristically American. Not least because surely grime is our hip-hop, and grime is where we're still progressive. In contrast, on this compilation we have tracks like 'Champagne Campaign' where Ratlin chats about, erm, champagne (who'd have thunk it!) with a weak rip-off of a Lex Luger beat. Then there's 'Can't See Me' from up-and-comer English Frank, who while I won't deny is lyrically talented, walks the well-trodden path of rapping about how "hard life is y'all!" over a tinkling piano. Then of course there's Sneakbo and the Bonnie to his Clyde, OG Niki, the 17-year-old who shot to viral fame after a freestyle about getting seen to by several men in one night. So you'd totally have high expectations for their collab-track 'Freak', right? Well don't, because it sounds like it was knocked out in their lunchbreak.

It's not all doom and gloom, mind. The beacons of light come by way of the scene's successes. 'It's All Love''s boring but inoffensive brand of hip-pop with Bashy and Wretch 32 is welcome respite, and Giggs features on another 'fuck the police'-themed track. You know what you're getting with Giggs (pictured); he's like a good Sunday lunch. The standout track is from London femcee Lioness, who combines bullet-like MCing over a dense, *almost* grime beat on 'The Bomb'. Which takes me back to my original point. This showcase of UK talent is by no means a bad listen, just underwhelming. If you're already a fan of the scene, buy it. But if you're looking for something to lose your shit over, listen to grime. ***Jo Fuertes Knight***

6

DOWNLOAD: USG – 'Hand On Your Gun' (only because it's SO SHIT), Margs Ft J Spades & Giggs – 'Fuck Feds', Lioness – 'The Bomb'

TOM JONES

SPIRIT IN THE ROOM ISLAND

Tom Jones is still commendably committed to re-imagining himself as a Rick Rubin-years Johnny Cash, by way of interestingly oddball selections of Americana and bespoke blues covers. Backed by a graceful but gritty band – which includes Warpaint's Stella Mozgawa on drums – a touch of the crotch-thrusting Las Vegas dazzler still flinches in the pleasingly demented showmanship on Jones' voodoo version of Tom Waits' 'Bad As Me'. The softer moments also shine, with a tender painting of Leonard Cohen's 'Tower Of Song' and a transcendent, baroque take on The Low Anthem's 'Charlie Darwin'. Cashback? Pretty close. ***Leonie Cooper***

7

DOWNLOAD: 'Tower Of Song'

AMON TOBIN

BOXSET NINJA TUNE

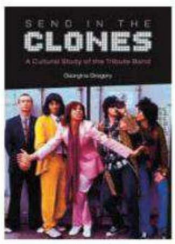
Amon Tobin has spent the past 15 years slowly building his legendary reputation as a bonkers electronic audio-visual pioneer. Like a modern-day Brian Eno with a penchant for drum'n'bass dynamics, the restless rhythms and dreamlike melodies that Tobin laces his tracks with somehow lend themselves equally to classical interpretations, club revamps and film scores. All of these feature on the almost comically comprehensive 7CD/2DVD/6 vinyl 'Boxset', including remixes from Noisa, 2562, Kwes and some more 'serious' musicians you can pretend to recognise. It's an ambitious but rewarding Amon extravaganza – now where did I put CD 7? ***Adam Corner***

6

DOWNLOAD: 'The Third Hand'

THE RIDER

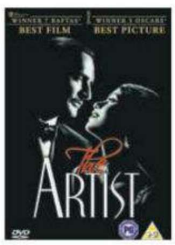
What we're reading, watching and wearing this week



Book

Send In The Clones

An in-depth study into the phenomenon of tribute bands, including interviews, case studies and an answer to the question, "but... WHY?"



DVD

The Artist

The award-winning silent film finally gets a DVD release this month. See what all the fuss is about from the comfort of your sofa.

Hat

Lola by Kangol

Partnering with Aerial7, this classic Kangol design gets an upgrade with an inbuilt sound disc – compatible with an iPod or Android phone.

THIS WEEK'S SINGLES

reviewed by NME's **TOM HOWARD**

ALT-J

BREEZEBLOCKS INFECTIOUS MUSIC

When Joe Newman's "*Please don't go/ I love you so*" starts, it seems harmless. But with the promise to "*hold her down with soggy clothes and breezeblocks*" it becomes as sinister as a welcoming smile from Jools Holland. This is brought to life in a video that's a cross between Coldplay's 'The Scientist' (it's in reverse), Radiohead's 'Just' (it'll take *hours* to dissect) and an *EastEnders* plotline (jealous lover turns murderer – but which lover?). A delicate, macabre triumph.

THE BLACK KEYS

DEAD AND GONE NONESUCH

At a time when economies are disintegrating willy nilly and no-one has *a bloody clue* who's going to win *The Apprentice*, it's easy to see why The Black Keys have become 2012's New Massive Band. Their plodding blues-rock is just so damn reassuring. They make rock music. It is good. You should listen to it.

PITBULL

BACK IN TIME RCA

Assuming *Men In Black III In 3D*'s gonna be the cinematic event of like, May, it seems odd to be wheeling out guest rapper extraordinaire Armando Christian Perez for the themetune. Will Smith's song for the first *MIB* was a genuine party banger, and briefly made him the world's best person. Pitbull lacks Smith's charm – favouring the cruise ship bodyguard look – and 'Back In Time' is all squeaks and cheesy club nods when really what you want is ALIENS.

SCHOOL OF SEVEN BELLS

THE NIGHT VAGRANT

Benjamin Curtis and Alejandra Deheza do everything right. This song, right here, has a nice vocal, decent bassline, speedy drumming, 'atmospherics' that absolutely do reference the period of the day the track's title refers to and yet... there's nothing to say. Nice. It's nice. Like having a shower and a massive sandwich at 3pm on a Saturday. Really bloody nice.

JAPANDROIDS

THE HOUSE THAT HEAVEN BUILT POLYVINYL

The fuzz. The garage. The rock. The obvious influence of Springsteen's America. The "*oh oh oh oh*" followed by the "*oh oh oh*". The ripped Levi's. The Cons. The ink. The drum rolls. The punk. The pop. The breaking the speed limit. The unwashed jeans. The greasy hair. The rabble rousing "*and if they try to slow you down/Tell them all to go to hell*". Yeah, this rules.

HERE WE GO MAGIC

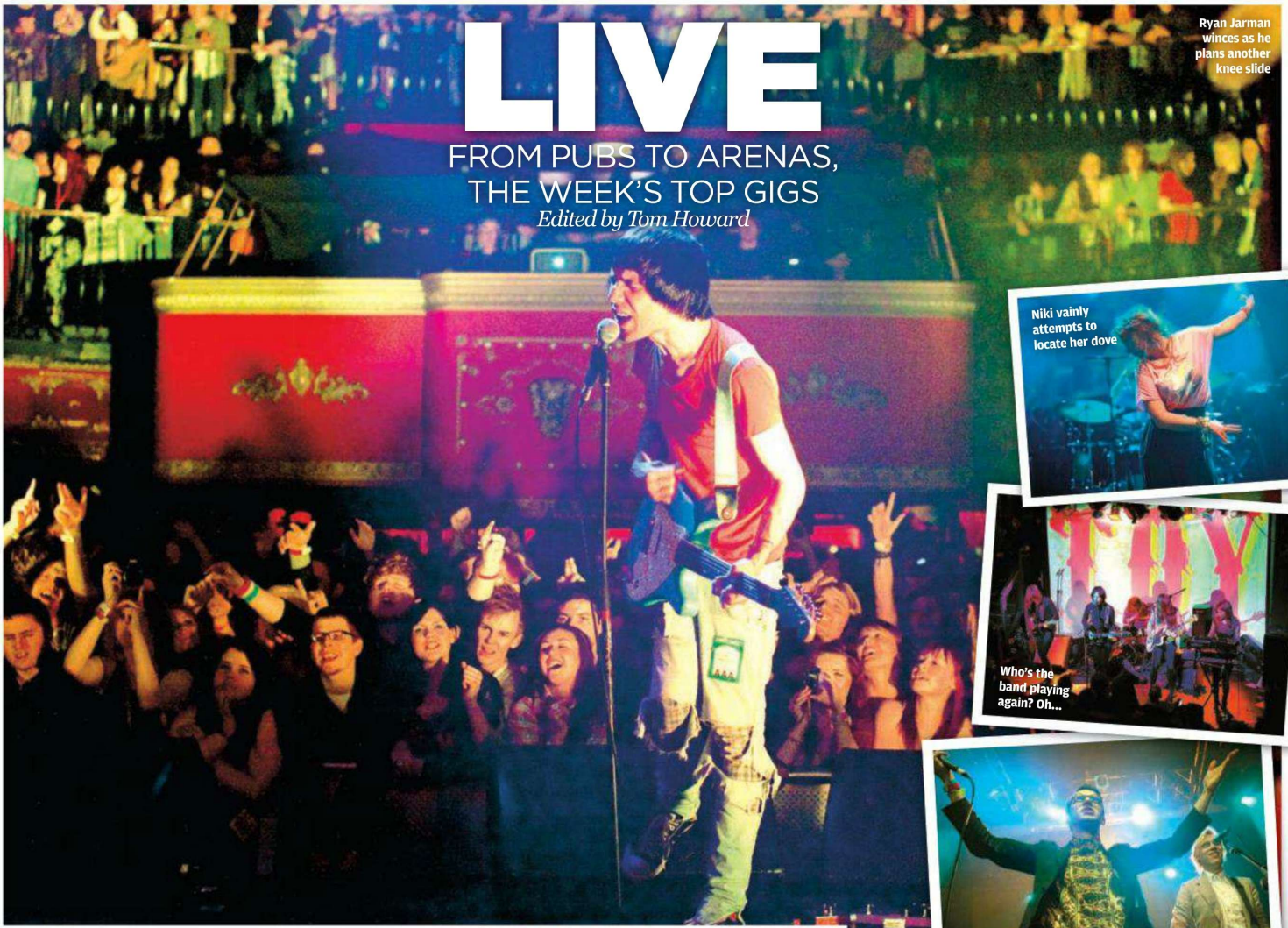
HOW DO I KNOW SECRETLY CANADIAN

Falling in love with robots is something you, me and everyone are gonna have to deal with as time and technology progress. Luckily Brooklyn's Here We Go Magic have addressed this and answered the question "*how on Earth will I dispose of my unwanted robot lover?*" in the video for this super breezy indie-pop, which suggests leaving it at a disused petrol station. So that's one less thing to worry about.

LIVE

FROM PUBS TO ARENAS, THE WEEK'S TOP GIGS

Edited by Tom Howard



Ryan Jarman winces as he plans another knee slide

Niki vainly attempts to locate her dove

Who's the band playing again? Oh...

Spector were going to an '80s fancy dress party later

CAMDEN CRAWL

VARIOUS VENUES, CAMDEN, LONDON SATURDAY, MAY 5 – SUNDAY, MAY 6

After a damp, downbeat Saturday ends with The Futureheads getting heckled by the boo-boys, Sunday's salvo of singalongs are a godsend

SATURDAY

Camden used to be a Mecca for the wonderfully weird, the Crawl the place to discover them, but today's sparse line-up and crappy crowd hints at a loss of mojo. **Veronica Falls** pack the Barfly with a load of people who, it seems, have never heard of Veronica Falls; **The Big Pink**'s Robbie Furze flings himself around the stage, doing an admirable job of whipping a host of largely apathetic 'Dominos' fans into something resembling enthusiasm. Then comes an ill-advised headline set. With recent a cappella LP 'Rant' passing many by, it's to a sea of confusion that **The Futureheads** emerge with a banjo and four microphones. The reaction veers from uncomfortable to depressing to gross. Tackling 'Hounds Of Love' and Kelis' 'Acapella' with note-perfect vocals and suitable wit, the Mackem boys are on form, but no-one cares. Pissed up lads yell "fuck off", someone lobs a pint, people leave in droves. At the end we're happy with the idea of never coming back to Camden.

SUNDAY

Fifteen hours later we're back, and Sunday kicks off with psych-purveyors **Toy** filling a picturesque side room of St Michael's Church. **Niki And The Dove** are impressive with their meatier-played-live electro-pop nuggets, but it's **Peace** that prove the weekend's biggest find.

> *The Cribs provide enough giddy kicks to keep the pissed-up lads happy*

In the dinge of the Underworld the four-piece are a filthy, fur-coated Suede gone grunge revelation. With just two tracks available it's obscene how confident and fully-formed this lot are. Back on the big stages **Spector** do the Spector thing of massive gob vs medium-sized tunes. **Glasvegas** enjoy a football terrace singalong, and headliners **The Cribs** end proceedings in KOKO the day before the release of fifth album 'In The Belly Of The Brazen Bull'. Its cuts 'Jaded Youth' and 'Chi-Town' sound ready to take on the world, while old favourites 'Hey Scenesters!' and 'Men's Needs' provide giddy kicks to keep the pissed-up lads happy. Camden, you got there in the end. ***Lisa Wright***

CRAWL WITH THE CRIBS

***NME*: What did you think of The Futureheads getting booed?**
Ryan: "They did what they're about now and people should respect that. You like to think if people are there and understand you, they want that, rather than treating you like a DJ that's just there to play the hits."
How did you go about your set?
"We didn't consider it like a festival set where you have to play the hits."
Are you fans of the Crawl?
"The last time we played was 2005 and the ceiling got pulled down, so this was a nostalgia trip. When we made 'The New Fellas' we spent a lot of time here and it informed that record. It was forged on the streets of Camden, so it's nice to come back."

VICTOR FRANKOWSKI

SIMPLE THINGS FESTIVAL

VARIOUS VENUES, BRISTOL SUNDAY, MAY 6

Didn't spend a day and night racing between six of Bristol's best venues and dancing your soles bare? Don't worry, here are the seven acts you should have seen, heard and fell asleep to

The arteries of the festival season have slowly started pumping party blood around the UK. Who'll be giving us life this summer? Well, there were seven acts at Bristol's multi-venue Simple Things Festival who laid down a marker for special times ahead...

1 ORIGAMIBIRO

Beautiful, Four Tet-esque ripples of melody, rhythms generated from loops, paper scrunches and the click-clack of typewriter keys – and a live video feed splicing all this together into a mesmerising visual backdrop. You can't help but be impressed by Origamibiro's audio-visual mechanics. A revelation.

2 VONDELPARK

One of the acts on the newly resurgent R&S label that has played such a central role in the post-dubstep melée, Vondelpark could do with reigning in the wailing vocals and letting their sparkling electronic melodies take centre-stage rather than walking the fine line between wonderful and wimpy. But they make a sophisticated noise nonetheless.

3 GRIMES

Surfing into town on a wave of hype that fills the O2 Academy with sweaty anticipation, Grimes bounces around like an electro-gypsy jack in the box, looking and sounding like Robyn gone electro-goth. As mangled nursery-rhyme melodies and cattle-prod synth stabs tumble out, they are received with swooning adoration by an audience intoxicated with the 'post-internet' girl. So incredibly 2012.

4 DEATH IN VEGAS

Bathed in a wash of red light, they slip effortlessly from monolithic walls of growling guitars (playing several tracks from seminal late '90s album 'The Contino Sessions') to the shimmering electronic pulse of recent single 'Your Loft My Acid'. Fucking heavyweight.

5 FACTORY FLOOR

With their hoods staunchly up, their heads resolutely down and their ultra-retro visuals stitching a digital quilt behind them, Factory Floor's deep, pounding, apocalyptic, industrial rhythms bring the freewheeling, chaotic spirit of a mid-Wales free party to Bristol's famous party boat the Thekla. It's thumping, industrial post-punk techno and they look very serious about it. Horrible, but we like it.

> *Factory Floor bring the chaotic spirit of a mid-Wales free party to Bristol*

6 HUDSON MOHAWKE & RUSTIE

They don't play together, but these two are the artists strip-mining rave for its precious jewels and crystal rhythms, which are lapped up like catnip for humans, with people scaling the Lakota's chrome fittings to get closer to the action. Here is searing, exciting, shape-shifting dance music that shows why these Lucky Me boys are worshipped so. They've perfected the art of banging out screwed, sideways, sci-fi hip-hop at a million miles an hour.

7 SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO

Despite producing what should be a party-starting stream of slick electro house, even the mighty SMD find they can't beat the curse of the all-day-and-all-night urban festival. By 3am their audience is either face down in their own vomit, asleep, or going nuts to Hudson Mohawke somewhere else. Dem's the breaks. ***Adam Corner***

A tricky moment for Grimes when she realises she forgot her laptop

LAURA PALMER

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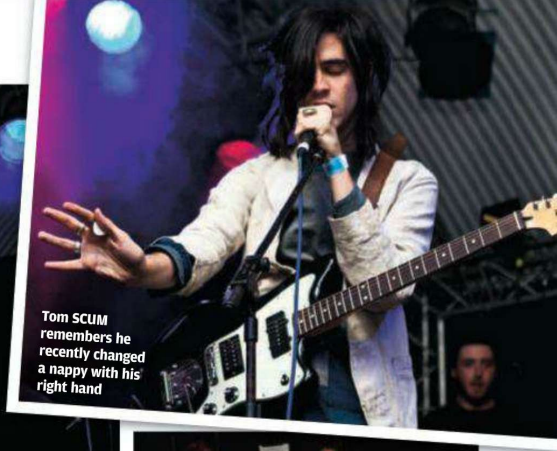
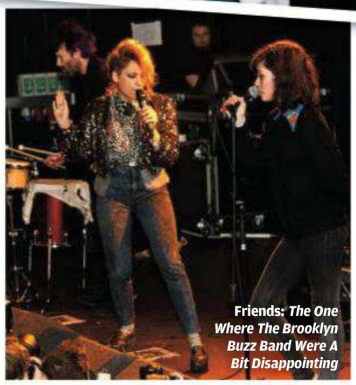
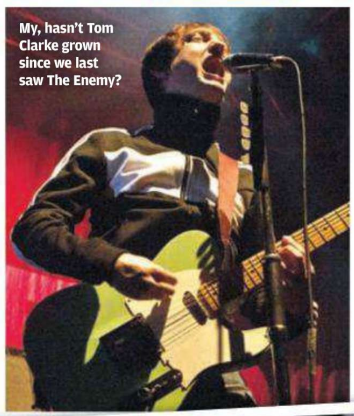
Howler living up to their name



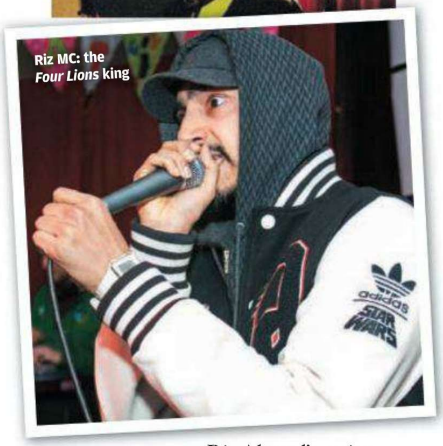
Tom SCUM remembers he recently changed a nappy with his right hand



Friends: *The One Where The Brooklyn Buzz Band Were A Bit Disappointing*



My, hasn't Tom Clarke grown since we last saw The Enemy?



Riz MC: the *Four Lions* king

LIVE AT LEEDS

VARIOUS VENUES, LEEDS SATURDAY, MAY 6

Essentially a drunken stagger around the Yorkshire city, taking in everything from edgy suave-pop to a psych rocker in a dress

Leeds: home of Everything Brilliant since 2006. Hence the sixth incarnation of Live At Leeds – crammed with talent, *way* drunk. It went like this:

THE ON-WAY-TOO-EARLY BAND

Surefire chart-chargers **Citizens!** are expounding their sharp'n'sparkly suave pop thang at the first gurgle of the beer pumps, a little stilted due to the early hour but still scintillating and edgy: no smart southern chap valuing his Gucci model cheekbones should be singing "*I'm in love with your sister/I took her home*" to a room of Yorkshire stag dos.

THE NOT-AS-CONFRONTATIONAL-AS-THEY-THINK-THEY-ARE BAND

Tom Cohen may be wearing a dress. A dress! Or maybe it's a traditional Bollywood smock coat. It's tough to know if you're being provoked when there are no lights. Similarly, no amount of hair-flailing and hippy psych maelstroms will ever shock, captivate or entrance us without a glimmer of originality thrown in. Sorry, **SCUM**.

THE BAND WHO BAFFLINGLY AREN'T AS MASSIVE AS THEY SHOULD BE

Put a wetsuit on, Julian Casablancas, and one day you might be as cool as Minneapolis' **Howler**, purveyors of new-wave beach bum brilliance akin to Brian Wilson dropping into some gnarly tubes (thanks *Hackneyedsurferglossary.com*) with Elvis Costello and Iggy Pop.

THE BAND WHO ARE NOT AT ALL LIKE YOU EXPECTED

Friends: icy Brooklyn sextronic funk-punk types prone to Gallic cigarettes and sneering dismissively at George Clooney from Parisian catwalks, right? U-ERRR! 'I'm His Girl' lied to us: only the glacial bassist could carry off a Gaultier grimace, the rest look and sound like a cruise ship funk band fronted by a cod-rap Cyndi Lauper. Who knew?

THE HEADLINERS WITH SOMETHING STILL TO PROVE

After an ill-received, formulaic second album, Cov's chanting crusaders **The Enemy** return on the eve of their third (see page 42), intending to not so much take no prisoners as Rapier missile the O2 Academy into a billowing fireball and shoot any survivors point-blank in the face with bullets made of riff. They're a sensation: an hour of relentless buzzsaw riot rock.

THE ACTOR'S SIDE-PROJECT

"Everybody say 'rubber dinghy rapids'!" For the first 10 minutes, you're thinking Riz Ahmed's entire act as **Riz MC** consists of standing in the audience talking about his lead role in *Four Lions*. Then he leaps onstage and reveals himself an artful, accomplished and insightful observational speed-rapper covering topics such as London's "*modern Mecca of the modern cultish cool*", the ghettoisation of society and the Truth Behind Terrorism. Fuck Mini Babybels! ***Mark Beaumont***

TOM MARTIN

EYES ON FILM

UPSTAIRS AT THE GARAGE, LONDON TUESDAY, MAY 8

There's something to be said for the frontman of a band who prowls the stage like it's the edge of a tightrope. This is one of many exemplary traits that Eyes On Film's fantastically fringed singer Dan Mills conveys at tonight's industry-packed show. One minute he's a freaky dancing Thom Yorke wannabe, spitting 'Planet Telex'-esque missives into the mic about criminal masterminds and Soho weirdos. The next he's picked up Nick Cave's confidence and Shaun Ryder's, er, dance 'moves' as he stumbles around the place. And despite looking like he's about to jump headfirst into the audience at least several times during the set, he never actually does. It's a canny trick that suggests Mills knows exactly what he's doing. While he's undoubtedly the band's focal point, the rest of Eyes On Film don't suffer too harshly because of it. Drummer Daisy Palmer – aided by Joe Leach's metronomic keys – is a bastion of brutality, while mohawked guitarist Callum Ryan has obviously been listening to both Tom Morello and Mick Jones non-stop for the past few years. All in all, it's a weirdly compelling combination that shouldn't quite work for them but often does. Throw in two great alt.rock singalong choruses in the shape of set closers 'It Ain't Here' and 'Something Wicked (This Way Comes)', and you have a formidable prospect for a new troupe of left-of-centre heroes. ***Matt Wilkinson***

LIL B

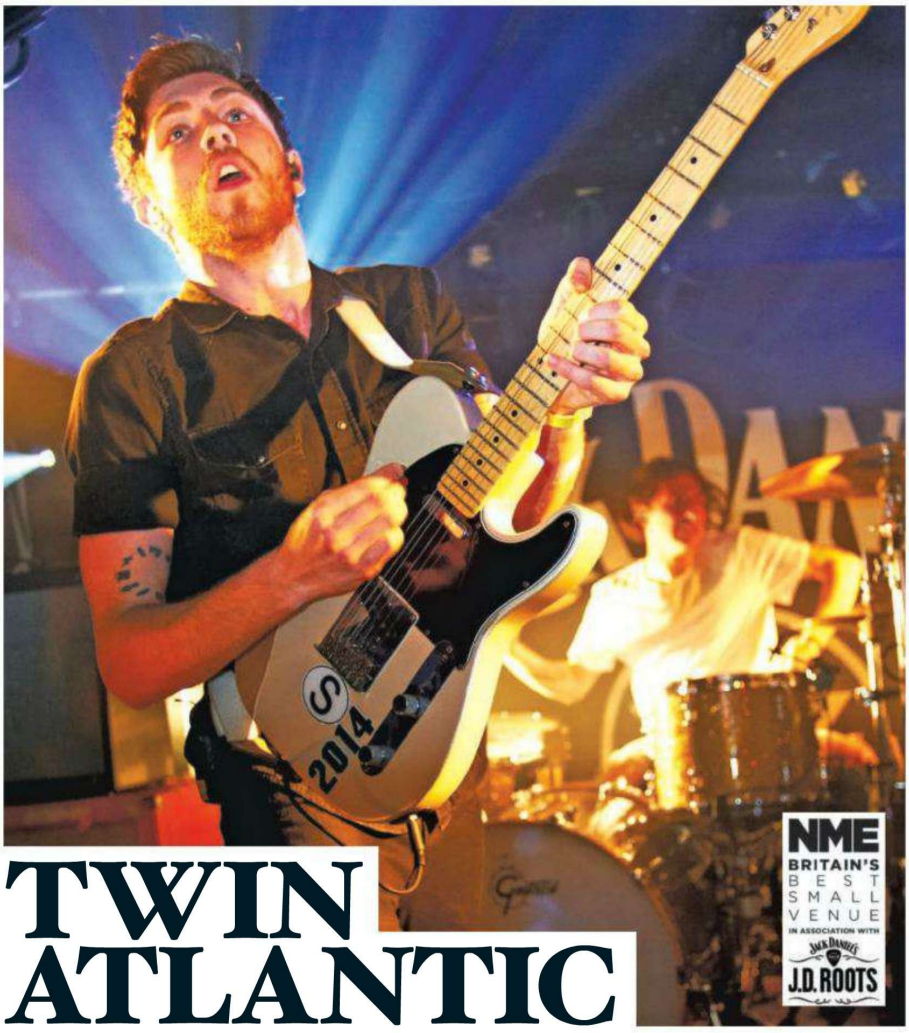
XOYO, LONDON SATURDAY, MAY 5

On record, Lil B's gonzo-fi hip-hop is a brittle chintz-fest – all bling and no balls. In a basement in Shoreditch, however, rap's first 'post-internet' superstar makes almost religious sense. As opener 'Ellen Degeneres' explodes into life, parp-y synths and plinking beats are changed out for some bass-chewing, hyperventilating, crunk-trap death machine. Bathed in purple UV lighting, the sight of Lil B's waxy, radioactive apparition glazes XOYO with a queasy sense of heightened reality. Combined with the marauding sonics, it proves too much for the over-16s crowd. Within moments, 200 fans crash the barriers and Lil B sinks beneath the deluge. The DJ pulls the track as a girl departs the stage in a high arc, as if punted like a wet tennis ball. And yonder a shirtless man stands regally above the melee, like the first monkey ever to have bum-rushed a rap show. After five minutes of this, the mob retreats and the 22-year-old Californian steps it up a gear, somewhat inadvisably. The rapper deploys a medley of footwork and B-boy techno, while 'I Want Your Bitch' and anthem 'Wonton Soup' gives the back walls a hammering. It's only the rapper's pleas for calm that keep the crowd at bay. "Tonight's all about love!" he hollers, a gent with the common touch, one of us – but a god all the same. "This my favourite show ever... London, we fucking won!" Positivity prevails. ***John Calvert***

KWESACHU

QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL, LONDON SATURDAY, APRIL 28

As seems to be a prerequisite in the new wave of electronica led by introverted sorts like James Blake, Kwes and Micachu are shy performers. The genius twosome are back three years after the success of their first offering, the thrillingly titled 'Kwesachu Mixtape Vol 1', to launch their equally thrillingly titled 'Kwesachu Mixtape Vol 2', and they're joined by a roll call of London's finest – Ghostpoet for 'HCHMWBIA', Speech Debelle for 'Plastic Coins' and DELS for 'Bird Milk'. They shuffle awkwardly about the stage and seem in actual discomfort when talking on the mic. Somehow it works because it focuses the music, locking their charisma and energy into warped synths, chopped and screwed hip-hop samples and Mica's delicate vocals, which reverberate around the room and demand attention. They understand bass and its power, and know it doesn't *have* to drown everything out to make an impact, and the awe-inspiring talents of live saxophonist Shabaka Hutchings are allowed to breathe on top of it. Kwes and Mica fiddle with distortion, layering and displacing vocals to a crowd dancing wildly to each drop. From their brief smiles at subtle technical details mid-song, their nods to one another, you get the sense that they feel free. There's no Catchy Pop Samples, Onstage Banter or even Smiling At The Audience. But when it sounds this good, why would there be? ***Kieran Yates***



TWIN ATLANTIC

KING TUT'S WAH WAH HUT, GLASGOW THURSDAY, MAY 3

The emo-punks return home to play a tiny venue – and glorious chaos, epic singalongs and crotch-grabbing ensue

As Queen's 'Bohemian Rhapsody' begins its operatic crescendo on the speaker system at King Tut's, a rabid band of fans' voices strain to screech out the karaoke classic. After all that,"Yes! Yes! Yes!" goes the chant – imitating WWE's Daniel Bryan – as booze slops over the top of paper cups held aloft by the rowdy bunch crammed in tonight. So it's convenient that Glasgow's Twin Atlantic – playing a homecoming show in the city's most iconic small venue – open their chaotic and righteous set with 'Yes, I Was Drunk'.

Predictably, the crowd go apeshit to every song played here. They're out to enjoy themselves and Twin Atlantic's distinctly Scottish emo-punk is the perfect accompaniment to some nocturnal mischief. 'Apocalyptic Renegade' is a flawless example: its epic chorus swells into a balls-out, mega singalong. This is followed by 'What Is Light? Where Is Laughter?', which spins the guys and gals down the front into an emo-sex frenzy as their hands reach out and clutch for singer Sam McTrusty's crotch.

"I'm so fucking nervous playing this next song," says a visibly shaky McTrusty. "Actually this is a bit like *Stars In Their Eyes*; all I need is a bit of dry ice," he adds before strumming the opening chords of Marc Cohn's 'Walking In Memphis'. The band were asked by tonight's hosts, JD Roots, to perform a song inspired by Tennessee, and while some might have gone for something totally obvious – Johnny Cash, say – Twin Atlantic plump for an overwrought pop shambles once covered by Cher.

Thankfully it's the one and only down point of the night, and they soon regain control of the crowd with a closing gambit of outstanding pop-rock anthems. 'Crash Land' is still one of their finest songs and 'Make A Beast Of My Self' rattles some cages. Of course, they finish with their most raucous track – the brilliant 'Free' – which conjures up an unruly circlepit in the middle of the crowd. A performance good enough for some madhead in the crowd to repeatedly bellow "Fuck yeah!" throughout, Twin Atlantic deliver the perfect nightcap. ***Jamie Crossan***

View From The Crowd

Laura Smith, 23, Glasgow

"They were so good. 'Walking In Memphis' was rubbish, but the rest was unbelievably amazing. I was desperate to get in that circlepit at the end."

CHRIS SAUNDERS

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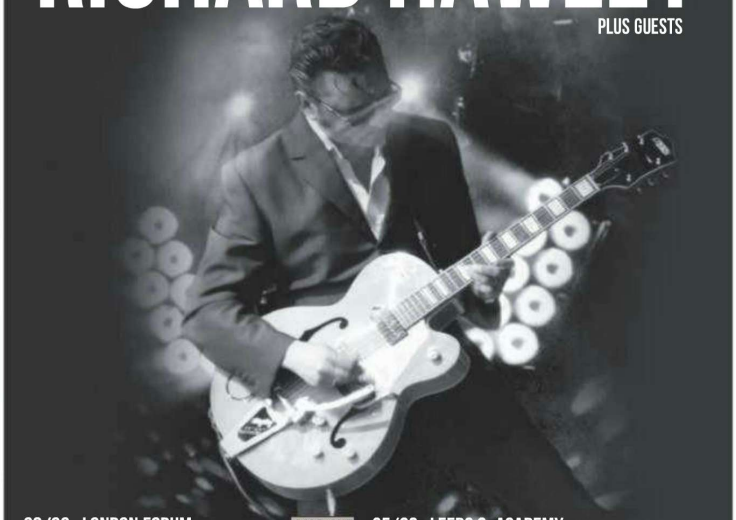

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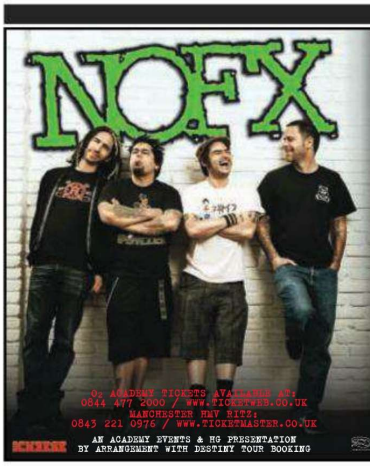

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TUE 4	BIRMINGHAM O_2 ACADEMY2	0844 477 2000	FRI 14	OXFORD O_2 ACADEMY2	0844 477 2000
THU 6	MANCHESTER CLUB ACADEMY	0844 811 0051	SAT 15	LONDON O_2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE *	0844 477 2000
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DEN SVENSKA BJÖRNSTAMMEN /S/
JAMES BLAKE /UK/ THE KOOKS /UK/ M83 /FR/
BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB /UK/
EAGLES OF DEATH METAL /US/
THE VACCINES /UK/ BAT FOR LASHES /UK/
JAMIE XX /UK/ CHASE & STATUS /UK/
BIG K.R.I.T. /US/ FEED ME /UK/

NOAH AND THE WHALE /UK/
FRANK TURNER & THE SLEEPING SOULS /UK/
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GIG GUIDE

THE UK'S BIGGEST GUIDE TO THE WEEK AHEAD

Edited by Lisa Wright

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BOOKING NOW

UNDERAGE FESTIVAL

STARTS: London Victoria Park, Aug 31

DON'T MISS

Since its inaugural bash in 2007, Underage Festival has consistently proven itself as the connoisseur's choice for non-boozy festival fun. Catering purely for 13 to 17-year-olds, the sister-fest to Field Day is a Mecca for young music buffs across the capital and beyond. So far confirmed are the likes of Spector, Theme Park, Fixers, Outfit and Summer Camp, while Pulled Apart By Horses (pictured) will up the onstage anarchy, and Danish punk outfit Iceage will no doubt provide some even more snarling thrills. This year's headliners are yet to be announced, but expect some impressive acts to be pulled out of the bag. Previous bookings have included Bombay Bicycle Club and Foals, while the fest has also seen early career sets from The xx, Wild Beasts and Laura Marling.

CROCODILES

STARTS: London Field Day, Jun 2

Following their support dates with The Cribs this month, Brandon Welchez and co take new LP 'Endless Flowers' out on their own this June.

THE OFFSPRING

STARTS: London O2 Shepherds Bush Empire, Jun 5

The loudmouth 'Pretty Fly (For A White Guy)' rockers hit up the capital for two dates, ahead of their ninth album 'Days Go By'.

KATE NASH

STARTS: Edinburgh Electric Circus, Jun 16

Ahead of her as-yet-untitled third album – the follow-up to 2010's 'My Best Friend Is You' – Ms Nash returns to the live circuit with a small club tour this summer.

CASIOKIDS

STARTS: London Barfly, Jun 27

Norwegian synth-poppers Casiokids make the kind of Euro-Metronomy synth-pop that defies any language barriers. Come join the party this summer.

FRANKIE ROSE

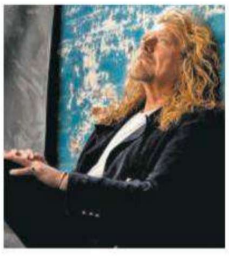
STARTS: London The Lexington, Jun 28

Following the release of her acclaimed debut solo LP 'Interstellar', Frankie heads out on an 11-date UK tour, finishing up at Camp Bestival (Jul 28).

GARBAGE

STARTS: London O2 Academy Brixton, Jul 1

The reunited '90s stars release their first album in seven years this month. Catch the new songs live (plus all the classics) on these headline dates.



ROBERT PLANT

STARTS: London HMV Forum, Jul 12

The legendary Led Zeppelin frontman takes his newest project, The Sensational Space Shifters, out for a one-off gig in the capital's Kentish Town.

ANTHONY HEGARTY'S MELTDOWN FESTIVAL

STARTS: London Southbank Centre, Aug 1

Hegarty (pictured) curates a programme of artists across the 12-day event.

OFF FESTIVAL

STARTS: Katowice, Poland, Aug 3

The budget Euro jaunt (€48 for three days!) has added the likes of Metronomy (pictured) and The Antlers to the bill, which features Iggy & the Stooges and Battles.

BEIRUT

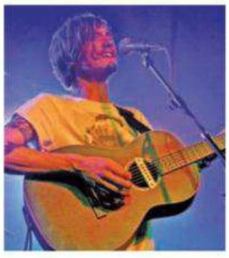
STARTS: Glasgow Barrowlands, Sep 11

Zach Condon and co embark on a mini three-date tour including a stop-off at Hammersmith Apollo (Sep 14) – their largest UK headline show to date.

SHARON VAN ETTEN

STARTS: London O2 Shepherds Bush Empire, Oct 8

The National-endorsed singer-songwriter stops over in London for a one-off headline date this winter.



DRY THE RIVER

STARTS: Cambridge Junction, Oct 16

The never-ending Dry The River tour continues with a brand new set of autumn dates, starting in Cambridge and winding up in London (Nov 1).

DAN KENDALL, RICHARD JOHNSON, TOM MARTIN, JOEY MALONEY

PICK *of the* WEEK

What to see this week? Let us help

THE XX

STARTS: London Battersea Arts Centre, May 18

NME PICK

First there were the rumours they might not even make another album. Then Jamie was quoted as saying they were going down the club music route. Then, at the foetal beginnings of 2012, came a demo of 'Open Eyes' – the only peep of new material to emerge from their hush-hush recording sessions so far and a frail, skeletal thing about as far removed from a dancefloor banger as you could hope to find. Now, however, is when we find out what Romy, Oliver and Jamie have actually been up to. Rounding off three intimate dates in the capital with a gig in their native south London, the trio are sure to unveil the fruits of their lengthy labours as well as provide a timely reminder of what captured our hearts in the first place. Ahead of one of the most anticipated comebacks of the year, this gig is truly one not to be missed.

Everyone's Talking About **WATCH THE THRONE**

STARTS: London O2 Arena, May 18

They don't come much bigger than this. Packing out a whopping five-night run at The O2, Kanye and the Jigga come to town to take their rightful thrones at the head of the hip-hop table. Taking in solo sets from both megastars as well as a slew of collaborative 'WTT' material, these shows are sure to be wild from beginning to end.

Don't Miss **GUNS N' ROSES**

STARTS: Nottingham Capital FM Arena, May 19

Legendary nut-job Axl Rose takes the current incarnation of his gang on the road for a seven-date UK arena tour. Their most recent jaunts (including 2010's infamous Reading Festival headline slot) were a rollercoaster of giddy highs and crashing lows (hour-long waiting time, anyone?). Who knows which way these dates will go, but one thing's for sure – they certainly won't be dull...

Radar Stars **MILK MUSIC**

STARTS: Cardiff Clwb Ifor Bach, May 16

Following their first ever UK show at The Great Escape, Olympia's newest grungers head out on a short headline tour this week. Last year's 'Beyond Living' EP booted the quartet to the top of the list of bands we're getting in a sweat about, and with impassioned live reports hinting they've got the onstage *cojones* to back it up, these dates are sure to justify the hype.

WEDNESDAY

May 16

ABERDEEN
Skint & Demoralised The Tunnels 01224 211121
BATH
Davina & The Vagabonds Chapel Arts Centre 0122 5404445
BELFAST
Dappy Queens University 028 9097 3106
BIRMINGHAM
Albert Hammond Glee Club 0870 241 5093
Japan Underground Hare & Hounds 0870 264 3333
JP Cooper Yardbird 0121 212 2524
Sarah Jezebel Deva The Ballroom 0121 448 0797
Slaughterhouse The Ballroom 0121 448 0797
The Temper Trap HMV Institute 0844 248 5037
Yelawolf O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000
BRIGHTON
Elvis Costello Centre 0870 900 9100
The Lovely Eggs Green Door Store 07894 267 053
Our Colour Company/The Beautiful Word The Hope 01273 723 568
BRISTOL
Howler/Hooded Fang/Fin Fleece 0117 945 0996
Left In Ruins/Crop Circles Croft (Main Room) 0117 987 4144
OCD Mother's Ruin 0117 925 6969
CAMBRIDGE
Gemma Hayes Portland Arms 01223 357268
CARDIFF
Matt Loveridge/Woolf Undertone 029 2022 8883
Milk Music/Eagulls Clwb Ifor Bach (upstairs) 029 2023 2199
Spector/Gabriel Bruce/Violet Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199
Volente 10 Feet Tall 02920 228883
EDINBURGH
Neil Thomson Captain's Bar 01316 682312
Paper Aeroplanes Sneaky Pete's 0131 225 1757
EXETER
Sanguine Cavern Club 01392 495 370
GLASGOW
Brokencyde Ivory Blacks 0141 221 7871
Electric Guest King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Estelle O2 ABC 0870 903 3444
I Dream In Colour Berkeley Suite
The Xcerts The Garage 0141 332 1120
HULL
Said The Whale New Adelphi 01482 348 216
LEEDS
The Handsome Family Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
Newton Faulkner Cockpit 0113 244 3446
LEICESTER
Attila The Stockbroker/Rory Ellis Criterion 01162 625418
Polar/Carcer City Soundhouse 07830 425555
LONDON
A Whisper In The Noise/Max Bondi/ Quinta Cafe Oto 0871 230 1094
Bear In Heaven Hoxton Square Bar and Kitchen 020 7613 0709
The Big Sleep Barfly 0870 907 0999
Bleached Shacklewell Arms 020 7249 0810
Daniel Ward-Murphy Club Surya 020 7713 6262
Delain/Trillium O2 Academy Islington 0870 477 2000
The East Collective Garage (Upstairs) 0871 230 1094
Funeral Suits Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
Get Cape. Wear Cape. Fly Garage 020 7607 1818
Lois & The Love/O Children/Arrows Of Love MacBeth 020 7739 5095
Lower Dens The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Niki And The Dove XOYO 020 7729 5959
Scissor Sisters/Little Boots O2 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000
Sharon Van Etten Scala 020 7833 2022
Step Panther/Dark Bells Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478
Willis Earl Beal Tabernacle 020 7243 4343
Xylo New Cross Inn 020 8692 1866
MANCHESTER
DZ Deathrays Soup Kitchen 0161 236 5100
Mystery Jets The Quay House
Passenger Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
Peasant The Castle 0161 237 9485
Shabazz Palaces Islington Mill 0871 230 1094
NEWCASTLE
Beans On Toast Cluny 0191 230 4474
Blackbird Blackbird Cluny 2 0191 230 4474
The Heavy Jets/The Vagabonds Black Bull 0191 414 2846
NORWICH
Neon Asylum Brickmakers 01603 441 118
Scroobius Pip Dragon Hall 01603663922
Sennen Arts Centre 01603 660 352
NOTTINGHAM
Duke Special Glee Club 0871 472 0400
Karima Francis Bodega Social Club 08713 100000
Lawson Stealth 08713 100000
PLYMOUTH
Twenty Twenty/Room 94 White Rabbit 01752 227522
SALFORD
Tim Hecker St Philip's Church 0161 834 2041
SHEFFIELD
Good Lovelies Greystones 0114 266 5599
The Horrors/Toy /Bo Ningen Leadmill 0114 221 2828
SOUTHAMPTON
Concrete Knives Joiners 023 8022 5612
ST ALBANS
The Waterboys Alban Arena 01727 844 488
WOLVERHAMPTON
The Blues Caravan/Erja Lyytinen Robin 2 01902 497860
Justin Currie Slade Room 0870 320 7000
WREXHAM
Death In Vegas Central Station 01978 358780

Spector, Clwb Ifor Bach, Cardiff

TOM OXLEY, GETTY, TOM MARTIN, NEAN NAGAI, RICHARD JOHNSON, ANDY WILLSHER, STEW CAPPER, ERIC HESS, ANIKA MOTTESHAW

THURSDAY
May 17

Fixers, O2 Academy, Oxford

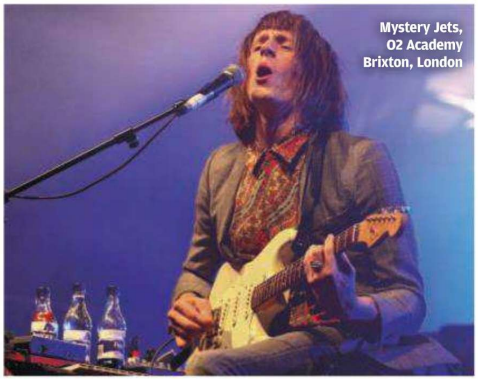
ABERDEEN
The Xcerts Lemon Tree 01224 642230
BATH
Joanna Chapman-Smith Chapel Arts Centre 0122 5404445
Syd Arthur Porter Cellar Bar 01225 404445
BIRMINGHAM
Bleached Rainbow 0121 772 8174
Funeral Suits Hare & Hounds 0870 264 3333
Get Cape. Wear Cape. Fly O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000
Passenger The Ballroom 0121 448 0797
BRIGHTON
Bear In Heaven Green Door Store 07894 267 053
The Primitives/The School The Haunt 01273 770 847
The Razorbacks Mesmerist 01273 328542
BRISTOL
Blaze Bayley The Tunnels 0117 929 9008
Bridge And Tunnel Croft (Main Room) 0117 987 4144
Katzenjammer O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000
Twenty Twenty/Room 94 Fleece 0117 945 0996
Wires/Abandon Mute Louisiana 0117 926 5978
CARDIFF
Hot Panda/Paper Factory Undertone 029 2022 8883
Hullabaloo/His Naked Torso/Greetings Gwdihw Cafe Bar 029 2039 7933
Japandroids Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199
CHELMSFORD
Lizzie B/King Bandit Hooga 01245 356 811
DERBY
Erja Lyytinen Flowerpot 01332 204955
The Waterboys Assembly Rooms 01332 255800
EDINBURGH
Henry Ibbs Captain's Bar 01316 682312
EXETER
Admiral Fallow Phoenix 01392 667080
GATESHEAD
The Low Road Three Tuns 0191 487 0666
GLASGOW
The Handsome Family St Andrews In The Square 0141 222 2128
Michael Kiwanuka O2 ABC 0870 903 3444
Nina Nesbitt King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
LEEDS
Happy Mondays/Inspiral Carpets O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
LEICESTER
Ezio Musician 0116 251 0080
Janice Graham Band Lock 42
LONDON
Blackbird Blackbird The Lexington 020 7837 5387
DZ Deathrays Barfly 0870 907 0999
The History Of Apple Pie Hippodrome 0208 5414411
Honeyslide/Sealings Garage (Upstairs) 0871 230 1094
The Jezabels Electric Brixton 020 7274 2290
Jodie Marie Bush Hall 020 8222 6955
Juju Borderline 020 7734 5547
Karima Francis Hoxton Hall 020 7739 5431
Mojo Fury/Ice Sea Dead People Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478
Scissor Sisters/Little Boots O2 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000
Shabazz Palaces XOYO 020 7729 5959
Silvatone/Exile Parade Club Surya 020 7713 6262
Spector/Eugene McGuiness/Gabriel Bruce Electric Ballroom 020 7485 9006
The Stay Frees/3rd Rock From The Sun/The Jackals Purple Turtle 020 7383 4976
Vertebrae O2 Academy Islington 0870 477 2000
Willy Moon Madame Jojo's 020 7734 2473
Zulu Winter/Exitmusic Boston Arms 020 7272 8153
MANCHESTER
Gaz Coombes Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392
Holy Other/The Haxan Cloak Islington Mill 0871 230 1094
Jim Lockey & The Solemn Sun The Garratt 0161 237 5111
Milk Music/Eagulls Soup Kitchen 0161 236 5100
Phronesis Band On The Wall 0161 832 6625
Random Hand Star & Garter 0161 273 6726
Sarah Jezebel Deva Dry Bar 0161 236 5920
Sharon Van Etten Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
Slaughterhouse Sound Control 0161 236 0340
The Temper Trap HMV Ritz 0161 236 4355
MANSFIELD
Midnight Wire/Tazer Intake Club 01623 450022
MIDDLESBROUGH
Naked Circus Cornerhouse 01642 253053
NEWCASTLE
Horace Silverman & The Kunt & The Gang Trillians 0191 232 1619
NORWICH
Aviator Brickmakers 01603 441 118
Polly & The Billets Doux Bicycle Shop 01603 625 777
NOTTINGHAM
Beans On Toast Bodega Social Club 08713 100000
Brokencyde Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484
OXFORD
Alex Hutton Wheatsheaf 01865 721 156
Fixers O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000
POOLE
Miles Hunt & Erica Nockalls Mr Kyps 01202 748945
READING
Concrete Knives South Street Arts Centre 0118 960 6060
SHEFFIELD
Kirsty Almeida Greystones 0114 266 5599
Newton Faulkner Leadmill 0114 221 2828
SOUTHAMPTON
John Spiers & Jon Boden Brook 023 8055 5366
WREXHAM
Terrorvision Central Station 01978 358780

FRIDAY
May 18

ABERDEEN
The Pigeon Detectives Lemon Tree 01224 642230
BATH
Camille O'Sullivan Komedia 0845 293 8480
BELFAST
Howard Donald Stiff Kitten 028 9023 8700
BIRMINGHAM
Castrovalva/Ice Sea Dead People Rainbow 0121 772 8174
Fixers HMV Institute (Temple) 0844 248 5037
The Horrors/Toy /Bo Ningen HMV Institute 0844 248 5037
Jim Lockey & The Solemn Sun Flapper 0121 236 2421
BOLTON
Bad Touch/The Brink Railway Venue 01204 306 450
BRIGHTON
Japandroids Green Door Store 07894 267 053
Promise Of Redemption Audio 01273 624343
12 Dirty Bullets The Hope 01273 723 568
BRISTOL
Beth Porter Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Calico Jack Mr Wolf's 0117 927 3221
The Correspondents /Benny Page Motion Ramp Park 01179 723111
Dirty Funk Syndicate Start The Bus 0117 930 4370
JP Cooper Thekla 08713 100000
The Lovely Eggs Croft (Main Room) 0117 987 4144
Syren City O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000
CAMBRIDGE
Band Of Friends Junction 01223 511511
CARDIFF
Critical Sound/Kasra Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199
The Damned Coal Exchange 029 2049 4917
Ice Sea Dead People/United Fruit Undertone 029 2022 8883
CARLISLE
Willy Mason Brickyard 01228 512 220
CHELMSFORD
Gary Powell/Polarsets Hooga 01245 356 811
CHELTENHAM
Tellison Frog & Fiddle 01242 701156
CHESHAM
Radials/Becky Wixon Loft Bar 07737636401
DERBY
Enthroned Old Bell 01332 343701
DUNOON
The Skunnered The Braes 01369701213
EDINBURGH
Duke Special Pleasance 0131 556 6550
The Slow Show Electric Circus 0131 226 4224
EXETER
Wretch 32 University 01392 263519
GLASGOW
Foreign Office King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Jill Jackson Oran Mor 0141 552 9224
Xavia Stereo 0141 576 5018
GLOUCESTER
John Spiers & Jon Boden Guildhall Arts Centre 01452 503050
LEEDS
Bleached/Milk Music Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
General Fiasco Cockpit 0113 244 3446
LEICESTER
The Primitives Lock 42
LIVERPOOL
The Jacobs Vinyl 0151 726 0160
Joy Orbison/Shields/Mammal Club Shipping Forecast 0151 709 6901
Sarah Jezebel Deva/Apparition/Fallen Fate Lomax @ Nation 0151 236 4443
LONDON
The xx Battersea Arts Centre 020 7223 2223
Blaze Bayley Monto Water Rats 020 7837 4412
Concrete Knives Club NME @ Koko 0870 4325527
Dissident/Feral Sun/Rayne 229 Club 020 7631 8310
Fred Half Moon 020 7274 2733
Gemma Hayes St Giles In The Fields 020 7240 2532
Hauschka Barbican Centre 020 7638 8891

CLUB NME
LONDON
CONCRETE KNIVES
MAY 18
KOKO
0844 847 2258

Herve/Baxta Nest 020 7354 9993
James Grant Borderline 020 7734 5547
Jayce Lewis Barfly 0870 907 0999
Jay-Z/Kanye West O2 0870 701 4444
Jehst 229 Club 020 7631 8310
Jimmy Cliff Indigo @ The O2 Arena 0870 701 4444
Local Girls/Knickers Wilmington Arms 020 7837 1384
Mystery Jets O2 Academy Brixton 0870 477 2000
New Ivory/Swim Deep/Sheen Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478
The Recusants/The New Cut Gang Ryan's Bar 020 7275 7807
Simian Mobile Disco/Objekt/Blondes Fabric 020 7336 8898
Subsource/The Wheel Of Four Tunes Amersham Arms 0208 469 1499
Tanlines The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Tree Pit Star Of Kings 020 7278 9708
The Valkarys/Frantic Chant Club Surya 020 7713 6262
When Giants Fall Garage 020 7607 1818
MANCHESTER
Alt-J/Money The Quay House
Brokencyde MoHo Live 0161 834 8180
Glenn Tilbrook Waterside Arts Centre 0161 912 5616
Katzenjammer Academy 0161 832 1111
The Paris Riots Soup Kitchen 0161 236 5100
Peter Hook FAC 251 0161 27 27 251
The Quangos/Wild Birds Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392
Severenth Roadhouse 0161 228 1789
NARBETH
Jodie Marie Queens Hall 01834 861212
NEWCASTLE
Antythesys Legends 0191 232 0430
Elvis Costello City Hall 0191 261 2606
The Firm Cluny 0191 230 4474
The Fontains Black Bull 0191 414 2846
Paul Heaton Dorset Arms Hotel 01912099754
7 Sins The Station 0871 230 1094
NORWICH
Chasing Tigers/Affairs Waterfront 01603 632 717
Faith/The Zoom Club Brickmakers 01603 441 118
Holy State Arts Centre 01603 660 352
NOTTINGHAM
Annie Mac Stealth 08713 100000
Happy Mondays/Inspiral Carpets Rock City 08713 100000
The Money Bodega Social Club 08713 100000
PLYMOUTH
The Zen Hussies Thirst Bar
PRESTON
Beans On Toast Adelphi 01772 897961
Better Left Alone/Guardians Roper Hall 01772 270861
SHEFFIELD
The Heartbreaks The Bowery 0114 2723487
Lawson Leadmill 0114 221 2828
Retrospectives/Encounters Corporation 0114 276 0262
SOUTHAMPTON
Toddla T/BITR8 Junk Club 023 8033 5445
STOKE ON TRENT
Dead Sons Sugarmill 01782 214 991
ST ALBANS
The Good Guns Horn 01727 853 143
SWANSEA
Will & The People Sin City 01792654226
WATFORD
Lost Without Cause/Telstar Flag 01923 218413


Mystery Jets, O2 Academy Brixton, London

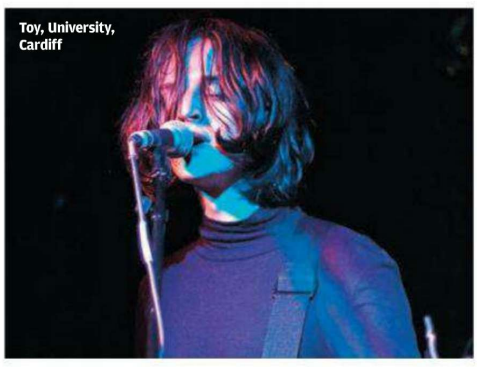
SATURDAY
May 19

Pond, Cockpit, Leeds

BATH
Straight Shooter King's Arms 01225 425418
BELFAST
Bob Log III Empire 028 9024 9276
The Distortion Project Limelight 028 9032 5942
The Handsome Family Spring & Airbrake 028 9032 5968
BIRMINGHAM
Basement Jaxx Rainbow Warehouse 0121 772 8174
Black Sabbath O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
BOLTON
The Strange Doors Railway Venue 01204 306 450
BOURNEMOUTH
Fanzine/Yoofs 60 Million Postcards 01202 292 697
BRIGHTON
Dub Mafia The Hope 01273 723 568
BRISTOL
Manana Mr Wolf's 0117 927 3221
Mugstar/Isola/Svalbard Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Sadie Fleming No 51 07786 534666
Those Crazy Horses Thunderbolt 07791 319 614
UK Subs/Demob/The Richard Heads Fleece 0117 945 0996
CARDIFF
The Lovely Eggs/Library Voices Buffalo Bar 02920 310312
Mark Broom/J.L.D. Undertone 029 2022 8883
CHELTENHAM
Random Hand/JB Conspiracy/Anti-Vigilante Frog & Fiddle 01242 701156
COATBRIDGE
Skint & Demoralised/The Wilde Soundwave Studios 01236 443845
CUMBERNAULD
Selective Service/Mickey 9s The Noizy 0871 230 1094
DERBY
Blaze Bayley Old Bell 01332 343701
EDINBURGH
Allan Johnston Captain's Bar 01316 682312
Kav Electric Circus 0131 226 4224
FALMOUTH
Wretch 32 The Stannery 0871 2200 260
GLASGOW
Bridge & Tunnel/Above Them/Citizens! 13th Note Café 0141 553 1638
Duke Special Oran Mor 0141 552 9224
The Dykeenies Queen Margaret Union 0141 339 9784
Katzenjammer King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
LEEDS
Get Cape. Wear Cape. Fly Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
Pond Cockpit 0113 244 3446
Sarah Jezebel Deva/Chasing Dragons/Release The Kraken University 0113 244 4600
LEICESTER
Said The Whale Lock 42
LIVERPOOL
Beans On Toast Heebie Jeebies 0151 709 3678
Cast/Cold Shoulder University 0151 256 5555
Simian Mobile Disco Magnet 0151 709 6969
Simian Mobile Disco (DJ Set) Shipping Forecast 0151 709 6901
The Wedding Present/Low Roar Zanzibar 0151 707 0633
LONDON
The Actionettes/Thee Faction Prince Albert 020 8894 3963
Ahab Half Moon 020 7274 2733
Belakiss Barfly 0870 907 0999
The Black Sharks/The Lounge Crusade Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Blood Music/Breath Out Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478
Charalambides/Michael Flower Band Café Oto 0871 230 1094
David Sinclair Trio Slaughtered Lamb 020 8682 4080
Dom Chung/Othello Woolf Nest 020 7354 9993
DJ Yoda HMV Forum 020 7344 0044
Happy Mondays/Inspiral Carpets O2 Academy Brixton 0870 477 2000
Heavy Metal Kids/The Loudshirts Merton Manor Club 020 8715 1292
The Hobos Windmill 020 8671 0700
I Dream In Colour Borderline 020 7734 5547
Jarle Bernhoft Cargo 0207 749 7840
Jay-Z/Kanye West O2 0870 701 4444
The Mother Black Caps Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
Mr Scruff KOKO 020 7388 3222
My Phaedra/Out Like Wolves Club Surya 020 7713 6262
October Sky/The Lost Souls/Gundogs Nambucca 020 7272 7366
The Phoenix Brothers/Green Brothers Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312
Promise Of Redemption Black Heart 020 7428 9730
Ron Pope Union Chapel 020 7226 1686
Section 136/Wonk Unit/2 Sick Monkeys New Cross Inn 020 8692 1866
Silbermond Garage 020 7607 1818
This Many Boyfriends The Waiting Room 020 7241 5511
Vendemmian/Lilygun Electrowerkz 020 7837 6419
MANCHESTER
Evacuate/The Strive Roadhouse 0161 228 1789
Famous Villains/The High Nines Dry Bar 0161 236 5920
Fury UK MoHo Live 0161 834 8180
Gemma Hayes St Ann's Church 0161 834 1161
The Horrors/Toy /Bo Ningen HMV Ritz 0161 236 4355
Lawson Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
Newton Faulkner Academy 0161 832 1111
Peter Hook FAC 251 0161 27 27 251
MILTON KEYNES
Ethan Ash Stables 01908 280800
NEWCASTLE
Jill Jackson Cluny 0191 230 4474
Jo James Band Black Bull 0191 414 2846
Just Handshakes (We're British)/The Railway Club Head Of Steam 0191 232 4379
Mick Wilson Cluny 0191 230 4474
NORWICH
Nathan Fake/Luke Abbott Arts Centre 01603 660 352
Overspill Brickmakers 01603 441 118
NOTTINGHAM
Breach Stealth 08713 100000
Elvis Costello Royal Centre 0115 948 2525
Guns N' Roses/Thin Lizzy Capital FM Arena 0115 948 4526
Practical Lovers/In Isolation/Matt Riviere Chameleon 0115 9505097
OXFORD
As Gods/Aethara Wheatsheaf 01865 721 156
Penryn
Joanna Chapman-Smith/Mat Martin Miss Peapods Kitchen Café
POOLE
The Zombies Mr Kyps 01202 748945
PORTSMOUTH
England Road/The Hype Cellars 0871 230 1094
The Imagined Village Wedgewood Rooms 023 9286 3911
READING
Off The Radar/South House Daze Rising Sun 0118 957 2974
SHEFFIELD
Glacier/Live For Today/Black Echo Corporation 0114 276 0262
Jake Morley Plug 0114 276 7093
SOUTHAMPTON
Brokencyde The Cellar 023 8071 0648
Standard Fare Lennons 023 8057 0460
STOKE ON TRENT
Black Road Home Underground 01782 219944
Obey Sugarmill 01782 214 991
SWANSEA
The Shakes Deers Leap
WOLVERHAMPTON
The New Saints/Mutiny Robin 2 01902 497860

SUNDAY
May 20

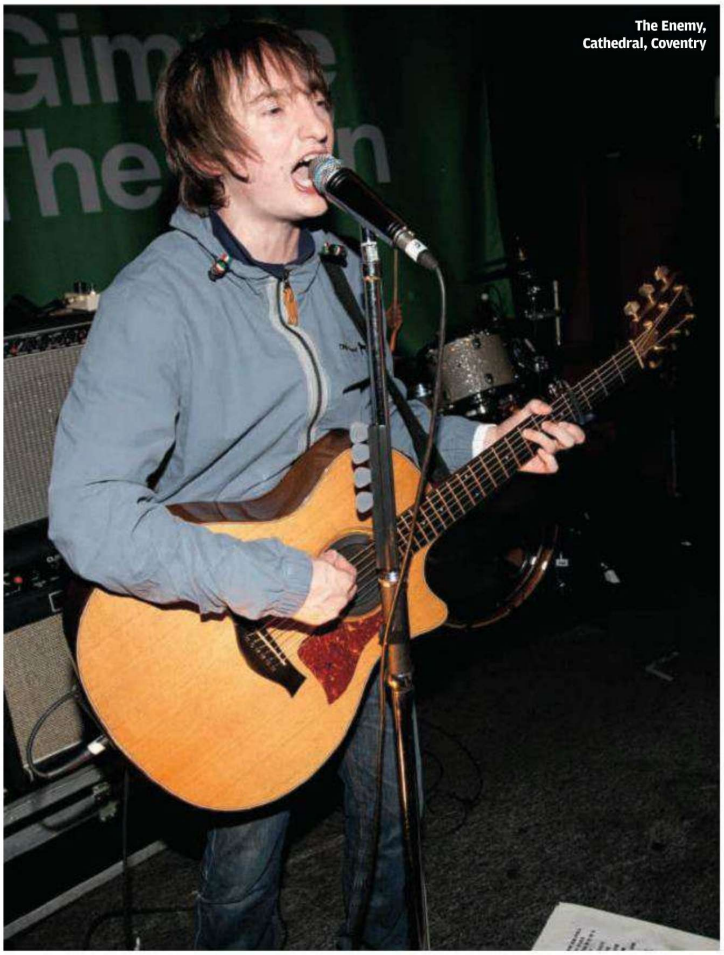
ABERDEEN
The Jacobs Café Drummond 01224 624642
The Magnets Lemon Tree 01224 642230
BATH
The Blood Brothers Moles 01225 404445
BIRMINGHAM
Jimmy Cliff The Ballroom 0121 448 0797
Katzenjammer O2 Academy 3 0870 477 2000
Pond Hare & Hounds 0870 264 3333
Red Shoes Kitchen Garden Café 0121 443 4725
BOURNEMOUTH
Dead Poets The Winchester 01202 552 206
Elvis Costello BIC 01202 456400
BRIGHTON
Dead Empires/Idiom Volks Tavern 01273 682828
BRISTOL
Big Chief Weird Bird Mr Wolf's 0117 927 3221
Flags/Forgery Lit/Jim Johnston Fleece 0117 945 0996
LostAlone/Mojo Fury Thekla 08713 100000
The Rhinovirus/Roots Of Reason Louisiana 0117 926 5978
CAMBRIDGE
Cast/Cold Shoulder Junction 01223 511511
CARDIFF
The Horrors/Toy/Bo Ningen Cardiff University SU 02920 781400
Said The Whale Buffalo Bar 02920 310312
Yip Deceiver/King Of Cats/Beta Blocker & The Body Clock Undertone 029 2022 8883
CHELMSFORD
Marc Halls/Jakob Deist Hooga 01245 356 811
CHELTENHAM
Tall Ships/Crazy Arm/Apologies, I Have None Frog & Fiddle 01242 701156
EDINBURGH
Jonquil Electric Circus 0131 226 4224
Tom Oakes/Kathryn Nicoll Captain's Bar 01316 682312
GLASGOW
Bleached/Paws Nice'n'Sleazy 0141 333 9637
Concrete Knives Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
Get Cape. Wear Cape. Fly King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Shabazz Palaces Arches 0141 221 4001
LEEDS
Duke Special Wardrobe 0113 222 3434
Sharon Van Etten Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
This Many Boyfriends Oporto 0113 245 4444
LEICESTER
Random Hand Soundhouse 07830 425555
LIVERPOOL
Newton Faulkner University 0151 256 5555
LONDON
Christina Carter Café Oto 0871 230 1094
Girlyman Slaughtered Lamb 020 8682 4080
Good Lovelies Zigfrid Von Underbelly 020 7613 1988
Jay-Z/Kanye West O2 0870 701 4444
Jon Windle New Cross Inn 020 8692 1866
Polarsets Barfly 0870 907 0999
Rax/Aina More Queen Of Hoxton 020 7422 0958
Steve Hackett Assembly Hall 020 8577 6969
S.H.E Half Moon 020 7274 2733
The Telegrams The Lexington 020 7837 5387
MANCHESTER
Bear In Heaven Soup Kitchen 0161 236 5100
Death Grips The Quay House
Jill Jackson Sound Control 0161 236 0340
Semitt Falls/Outreach Academy 0161 832 1111
Swimming/Dallas Simpson Wilbraham St Ninian's Church
NEWCASTLE
Bob Log III Cluny 0191 230 4474
Damascus The Tyne 0191 265 2550
NORWICH
Inspiral Carpets/Deadbeat Echoes Waterfront 01603 632 717
It Boys! Waterfront Studio 0160 363 2717
NOTTINGHAM
Milk Music/Human Hair Chameleon 0115 9505097
PORTSMOUTH
Attila The Stockbroker Cellars 0871 230 1094
WARWICK
Camille O'Sullivan Arts Centre 024 7652 4524


Toy, University, Cardiff

GET IN THE GIG GUIDE!

DO YOU WANT TO GET YOUR BASH INCLUDED IN THE NME WEEKLY GIG GUIDE? GO TO NME.COM/GIGS AND SUBMIT YOUR LISTING FOR FREE. YOU MUST SUBMIT DETAILS AT LEAST THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE GIG DATE

MONDAY
May 21


The Enemy, Cathedral, Coventry

BIRMINGHAM
Wheatus The Ballroom 0121 448 0797
BRIGHTON
Ice Sea Dead People Prince Albert 01273 730 499
Make Do And Mend/Set Your Goals The Hydrant 01273 608 313
Sharon Van Etten Komedia 01273 647 100
BRISTOL
The Handsome Family/Tiny Ruins Fleece 0117 945 0996
Japandroids/Cadence Weapon The Cooler 0117 945 0999
Pete Roe Louisiana 0117 926 5978
White Denim O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
CARDIFF
Duke Special/Foreign Slippers Glee Club 0870 241 5093
It Boys! The Moon Club
COVENTRY
Dexters/Smokey Bear S7ven 07834 365815
The Enemy Cathedral 02476521200
TV Buddhas Taylor John's House 024 7655 9958
EDINBURGH
Admiral Fallow Queens Hall 0131 668 2019
Ben Miller Captain's Bar 01316 682312
GLASGOW
Fixers King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
LostAlone/Mojo Fury Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
LEEDS
Blue Touch Paper Wardrobe 0113 222 3434
DZ Deathrays Cockpit 0113 244 3446
Shabazz Palaces Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
LIVERPOOL
Guns N' Roses/Thin Lizzy Echo Arena 0844 8000 400
LONDON
Al Parrish Green Note 0871 230 1094
Choir Of Young Believers Birthday's
The Dunwells Borderline 020 7734 5547
Gallon Drunk Rough Trade East 0207 392 7788
Jay-Z/Kanye West O2 0870 701 4444
Malcolm Middleton/Human Don't Be Angry Cargo 0207 749 7840
Molly Wagger Social 020 7636 4992
Rascals/Kyra/Rax XOYO 020 7729 5959
The Rasmus O2 Academy Islington 0870 477 2000
Reachback/Josh Bunce Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Seadogs/Lieutenants MacBeth 020 7739 5095
Southern/Douglas Dare Slaughtered Lamb 020 8682 4080
Stars Of The Search Party Garage 020 7607 1818
Still Flyin'/Poppy Perrezz The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Sylver Tongue Sebright Arms 020 7729 0937
The Temper Trap/Cymbals KOKO 020 7388 3222
To Kill A King Barfly 0870 907 0999
Various Cruelties Hoxton Square Bar and Kitchen 020 7613 0709
MANCHESTER
The Crookes Sound Control 0161 236 0340
Hauschka Royal Northern College Of Music 0161 273 6283
The Jacobs Thirsty Scholar 0161 273 7543
Oberhofer Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
MILTON KEYNES
Blancmange Stables 01908 280800
NEWCASTLE
Bleached Cluny 2 0191 230 4474
Get Cape. Wear Cape. Fly O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Niki And The Dove Cluny 0191 230 4474
NORWICH
Joanna Chapman-Smith/Mat Martin Bicycle Shop 01603 625 777
NOTTINGHAM
Dream In Colour Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484
OXFORD
The Blues Caravan/Dani Wilde Bullingdon Arms 01865 244516
SHEFFIELD
Michael Kiwanuka Leadmill 0114 221 2828
WOLVERHAMPTON
The Primitives/The School Slade Room 0870 320 7000

TUESDAY
May 22

ABERDEEN
Newton Faulkner Lemon Tree 01224 642230
BIRMINGHAM
Heather Peace Glee Club 0870 241 5093
Niki And The Dove HMV Institute (Temple) 0844 248 5037
The Waterboys Symphony Hall 0121 780 3333
BRISTOL
Blythe Pepino & The Baker Boys Coronation Tap 0117 973 9617
Ed Sheeran/Luke Concannon Fleece 0117 945 0996
Elvis Costello Colston Hall 0117 922 3683
Good Lovelies St Bonaventure 0117 929 9008
Malcolm Middleton/Human Don't Be Angry Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Waltrapas Mr Wolf's 0117 927 3221
CAMBRIDGE
Gallon Drunk/Long Bone Trio Portland Arms 01223 357268
Michael Kiwanuka Junction 01223 511511
CARDIFF
Jill Jackson Buffalo Bar 02920 310312
COVENTRY
The Enemy Cathedral 02476521200
Janice Graham Band/This Modern Youth S7ven 07834 365815
DERBY
Nobody's Fool/Better Left Alone The Vic Inn 01332 74 00 91
EDINBURGH
DZ Deathrays Sneaky Pete's 0131 225 1757
GLASGOW
The Crookes King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
The Jacobs 13th Note Café 0141 553 1638
Sleep/A Storm Of Light Arches 0141 221 4001
HULL
The Pigeon Detectives The Welly 01482 221113
LEEDS
Bear In Heaven Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
LEICESTER
Gary Numan/The Officers O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
I Dream In Colour Firebug 0116 255 1228
Martin Luke Brown/Rosie Doyle Musician 0116 251 0080
LIVERPOOL
Belleruche Shipping Forecast 0151 709 6901
LONDON
Anna Ternheim Bush Hall 020 8222 6955
Appaloosa Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191
Beneath The Beach Garage 020 7607 1818
Bleached Birthday's
Boat To Row/Megan Henwood Half Moon 020 7274 2733
Brendan Benson Scala 020 7833 2022
Cleo T/Louise Le May Sebright Arms 020 7729 0937
Concrete Knives Madame Jojo's 020 7734 2473
Formby/The Laboratory Of Odd Club Surya 020 7713 6262
Gravenhurst/Sweet Lights The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Gun O2 Academy Islington 0870 477 2000
It Boys! Barfly 0870 907 0999
Japandroids CAMP Basement 0871 230 1094
Jay-Z/Kanye West O2 0870 701 4444
John J Presley Powers Bar 0207 624 6026
Josh Kumra Social 020 7636 4992
Krystle Warren/Dead Flamingoes Dingwalls 020 7267 1577
Look Stranger! 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095
Oberhofer/Shinies/Kappa Gamma Hoxton Square Bar and Kitchen 020 7613 0709
Passenger Borderline 020 7734 5547
Pond Cargo 0207 749 7840
Schlomo E4 Udderbelly at Southbank Centre 0844 545 8282
Son Belly/Slaves/Ill Murray MacBeth 020 7739 5095
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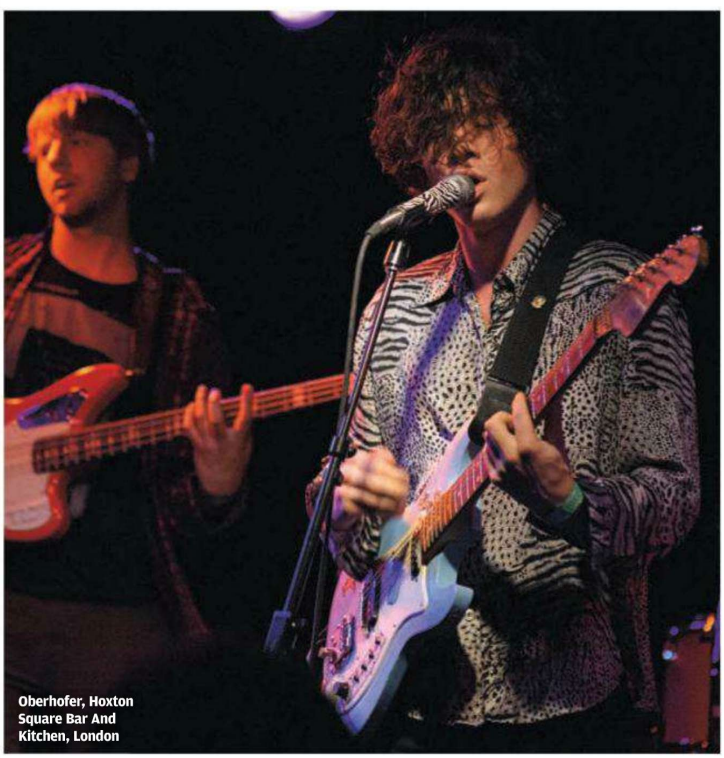
Oberhofer, Hoxton Square Bar And Kitchen, London

VERSUS

Peter Robinson Vs ROSS FUTUREHEADS

He wakes up in the belly of a whale every morning... but that's nothing compared with Mr Millard's buttery night-horrors

• Imagine if one night the whale came to life, with Ross inside it

• It would probably die due to lack of water, and Ross would suffocate

• That's better than a butter knife coming out of your foot though, right?

Hello, Ross. Where are you?
"I'm very well, thanks for asking."

WHERE are you?
"I'm in my own home, in Newcastle."

What do you see? What is the vista?
"Well I'm a big fan of pacing around when I'm on the phone so I'm treading the boards as we speak. To my left is a nice view of the Tyne, and to my right is a blue, oval-like structure which I sleep in."

Pardon?
"I sleep in a kind of ball."

Right.
"Should I explain what I mean?"

Yes.
"Well, I live in this flat with my girlfriend. It's like a one room-type of flat. When we moved in, there was this structure that had been designed like a bedroom. A huge blue ball. It's almost like blue felt on the outside. Inside, it's like a boat, and there's a mattress inside, and it hangs from the ceiling on a girder."

This doesn't sound like a structure that is particularly conducive to romance.
"It swings! (*Laughs*) Well, it's not great for anything, really. It's not great for sleeping in. I can see why they did it, but when the BT man comes round or someone comes round to sort out the dishwasher they always jump to conclusions and think it's some sort of pervy device. But really it's got more of a whale-like persona."

And each morning you are sort of 'birthed' by the whale?
"Yes. Maybe there is a spiritualistic bent to it."

Is everything else in your studio completely normal?
"Yes. I'm not really the sort of person who would normally own this, but the rest of the flat was nice enough for us to go with it."

Now people have recovered from the shock of your a cappella album and life around the United Kingdom is slowly but certainly getting back to normal, how do you feel? Is there a sense of 'what do I do now?' Or 'where do I go?' Or 'what do I say?'
"I think my attitude to these things has changed somewhat over the years. The expectation isn't the same as it once was, although nothing quite is, is it? The charts aren't the same as they once were, are they?"

They have quite literally changed.
"We don't really think in those terms. We just think about having a good time on the nights we've got shows. The festival dates, playing to a slightly unsuspecting audience, will be fun."

It must be like being a boyband. No instruments to hump around, you just turn up, sing a few songs and clear off.
"This is it. THIS IS IT! It has spontaneity to it."

Do you have any recurring dreams?
"Yes."

Is it something to do with being eaten by a whale?
"No. I had one when I was a kid that I had a butter knife stuck half way down the ball of my foot."

Oh dear.
"And it would twang in the same way a diving board would."

Bloody hell.
"I don't think it would mean anything to anyone though."

I think it would and I think it would mean something horrible.
"It's pretty freaky isn't it?"

Yes. If I were to draw a graph of your career, what shape would it be?
"Toblerone shapes."

From the side, presumably, not head on?
"Yes! NOBODY would want a head-on Toblerone career. I'd come off the phone and slit me wrists if it was Toblerone head on! Life's has its ups and downs, doesn't it? Life is about managing expectations, Peter. And I feel we've run the gamut of expectations in this band. We're now in the position where we've got our label, we've got our fans, and we can do what we want. And that's a good place to be."

NME

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THE LEGENDARY NME CROSSWORD

TAXING THE FINEST MINDS IN ROCK'N'ROLL FOR SIX DECADES

Compiled by Trevor Hungerford

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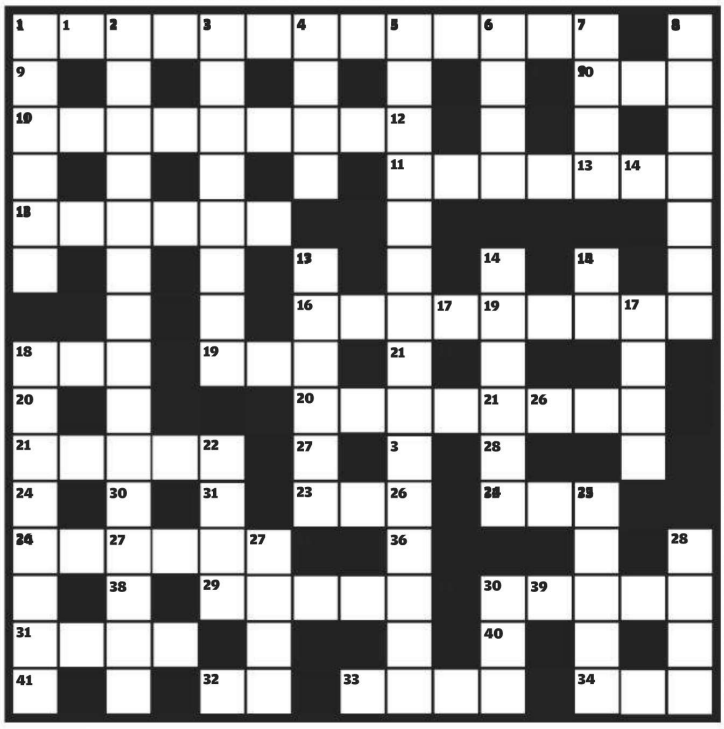
CLUES ACROSS

1+14D The 'Subhuman', 'Queer' and 'Stupid Girl' types are not for you to associate with (3-4-4-2-6)
9 "*I got speed and I walk on* __", from Oasis' 'The Hindu Times' (3)
10 John Lydon re-introduces his band (4-2-3)
11 New York experimental rock band with line-up of Ian Williams, John Stanier and Dave Konopka (7)
12+16A It's a very rare occurrence for Talking Heads to do this number (4-2-1-8)
18 Hip-hop artist known as __ Mix-A-Lot (3)
19+30D Big talk from Sum 41 about this number (3-3)
20 Puffing away on it like a Weezer (4-4)
21 Canadians who had a 'Push' start in the wet (5)
23 Spiritualized number taken from The Electric Prunes (3)
24 Begged to have an electro dance band included (3)
26 In 2007 they released their first studio album in 30 years entitled 'Long Road Out Of Eden' (6)
29 The Drums have some notes that might need some change (5)
30 Carol gets upset by Tim Buckley album (5)
31 "*___ if you want to, ____ around the world*", The B-52's (4)
32 (See 13 down)
33 Band that were last-minute replacements for The Stone Roses at Glastonbury in 1995 (4)
34 He's wrong to name song by Vegas, group formed by ex-Specials' Terry Hall (3)

CLUES DOWN

1+28D Norah Jones was hopefully just in time with this album (3-3-4)
2 "*Why pamper life's complexity when the leather runs smooth on the passenger seat*", 1983 (4-8-3)
3+18D The emergence of balance and harmony in the music of Muse (6-2-8)
4 "*Give me some ____, I'm coming loose*", Foo Fighters (4)
5 1997 hit that was a re-working of a 1983 Police number (3-2-7-3)
6 Kids In Glass Houses and Alice In Chains have both got the same filth on their albums (4)
7 Band that recorded 32 live sessions for the John Peel radio show (4)
8 House Of Love number gives REM such an upset (5-2)
13+32A The Verve having a breather, possibly, in 2008 (6-2)
14 (See 1 across)
15 'Everyone Says _' to David Bowie (2)
17 Joe ____, legendary producer who was the subject of 2009 movie *Telstar* (4)
18 (See 3 down)
22 '60s group whose hits include 'Gloria' and 'Here Comes The Night' (4)
27+25D Not all of the females went for The Rolling Stones (4-5)
28 (See 1 down)
30 (See 19 across)



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APRIL 21 ANSWERS

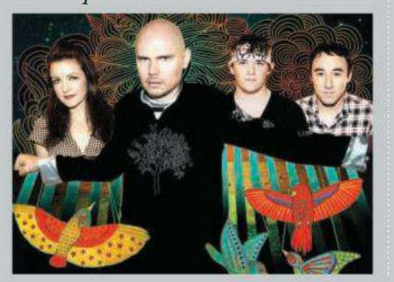
ANSWERS ACROSS
1+29A Gold On The Ceiling, 9 Vertigo, 10+8D Once And For All, 11 Rihanna, 12 Voyage, 14 Arrival, 16 Blue Jeans, 18 Set, 20 American Idiot, 22+30A I'll Never Get Over You, 25 Nonstop, 28 Mixed Up

ANSWERS DOWN
1 Good Vibrations, 2+28D Lucky Man, 3 Orange Juice, 6 Arthurs, 7 Dion, 13 Palace, 15 Vest, 17 Uberlin, 19+4D The Rip Tide, 21 Oto, 23 Taxi, 24 Video, 26+5D The Everlasting, 27 PIL

COLLECTORS' CORNER

SMASHING PUMPKINS

Call yourself a superfan? Here are the gems that no Smashing Pumpkins obsessive should be without



EARPHORIA (1994)

A soundtrack to the band's 'Vieuphoria' video compilation, this collection was initially released as a limited edition of just 1,000 promotional copies. Although it was eventually given a commercial release in 2002 after heavy bootlegging, the initial promo is one of the most sought-after collectables in the group's discography.

Need To Know: One of the tracks featured, 'Disarm', is a recording lifted from the group's performance on infamous Channel 4 show *The Word* in September 1993.

PISCES ISCARIOT (1994)

A compilation album consisting of the band's B-sides and a selection of outtakes, with an initial limited pressing featuring a 7-inch single with a couple of extra tracks (featuring a B-side and a demo). Among the highlights contained within are live favourites 'Soothe' and 'Starla', as well as cover versions of tracks by Fleetwood Mac ('Landslide') and The Animals ('Girl Named Sandoz').

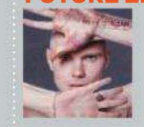
Need To Know: The CD, LP and cassette all came with completely different covers.

LIVE AT CABARET METRO 10-5-88 (2000)

When the Smashing Pumpkins played their 'farewell' show at Chicago's Metro, they surprised fans by giving away this live album of their fourth ever performance, also at the same venue. The show recorded here was also the first time the band performed with Jimmy Chamberlin, their drummer during their 'glory years' and also for a spell during their comeback in 2007.

Need To Know: Guitarist James Iha designed the cover art for the live CD.

BILLY CORGAN – THE FUTURE EMBRACE (2005)



The singer's only solo album to date came in between the end of his post-Pumpkins band Zwan and the eventual reactivation of the Pumpkins. With help from Bon Harris of Nitzer Ebb, the record favours a more electronic sound, and features a cover of the Bee Gees classic 'To Love Somebody' with guest vocals from The Cure's Robert Smith.

Need To Know: Corgan's first book of poetry, *Blinking With Fists*, was published a year before 'The Future Embrace'.

WORDS: ALAN WOODHOUSE

FANMAIL

YOU GET IN TOUCH, WE RESPOND, THINGS GET OUT OF HAND

Edited by Jenny Stevens

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The Big Issue

What everyone's talking about this week

LETTER OF THE WEEK

RIP ADAM 'MCA' YAUCH

From: Veryan Leaper
To: *NME*

Informed of Adam 'MCA' Yauch of the Beastie Boys' passing this week, I think I speak for everyone when I convey my shock at this turn of events. With his cancer being described as "very treatable", their induction into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, and the eventual release of 'Hot Sauce Committee Part Two', the Beastie Boys seemed well on their way back to their rightful place at the top. I didn't just see this as the death of a marvellous lyricist and instrumentalist who was the heart and soul of every record he contributed to (he was the shining light of 'The Mix-Up', by anyone's account), I saw the death of a legend, a true pioneer of his time and genre. If there's one thing I've learned from the death of this pioneer of rap, greatly admired by not just me, but all who have ever experienced the imprint he has left on the music industry, it's this: if there was anyone who could 'Rhyme The Rhyme Well', don't even question it, you know the man.

NME's response...

Everyone at NME Towers was as saddened to hear the news about Adam. MCA embodied everything music should – challenging stereotypes, speaking out about important issues and never compromising. From his commitment to Buddhism to (albeit later) saying how neanderthal it was when rappers acted like misogynist dicks (duh!), you believed every intelligent and witty word he said. No-one else could've put Sonic Youth, Noel Gallagher and Chuck D on the same stage to play a gig in aid of Tibetan independence! And let's not forget his filmmaking and directing skills – from 'So What'cha Want' to *Fight For Your Right Revisited*. Everything Adam laid his hand to, he did with 100 per cent passion and style. What an amazing man. What a loss. Rest in peace – JS

Winners should email letters@NME.COM to claim their limited-edition Sonic Editions print

RESPECT TO YAUCH

From: Daire Bearce
To: *NME*

I remember the first time I heard 'Paul's Boutique'. It redefined everything I thought I knew about music. I had never heard music so bright and colourful and funny and intelligent. It really opened my eyes. We've lost a true great.

From: Kieron Sutton
To: *NME*

I saw the Beasties in Glasgow in 2004 – one of the best shows I've ever seen. They encored with 'Gratitude' and 'Sabotage' – the two Yauch bass riff songs, the two songs Adam absolutely owned.

From: Ben Peter Scott
To: *NME*

Such a sad loss. It was 1998's 'Hello Nasty' that made me realise how brilliant this band was. MCA, Mike D and Ad-Rock released some classic albums that will surely never be eclipsed in the world of hip-hop. 'Hot Sauce Committee Part Two' was a welcome return to form, and news that Yauch's treatment for cancer was going well offered hope for the future. The loss of Adam Yauch is tragic, and potentially signals the end of hip-hop's greatest musical force. The Beastie Boys may have been three geeky white boys from New York, but they expanded every possibility in the musical book, and will never be forgotten.

From: Neil Renton
To: *NME*

Can't believe Adam Yauch is dead. In his younger days he may have fought for his right to party, but in his later years he fought for what he believed in. And not only did he stand up for the people of Tibet but he was part of one of the most influential acts of the past three decades. The worst was feared with the delayed album and tour and his non-appearance at the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame. Now the worse has been realised. You know you can't, you won't and you don't stop.

From: Dan Hailstone
To: *NME*

'Hello Nasty' opened my world beyond skinny kids with guitars. It's not how long you live, but what you do while you're here.

From: *NME*
To: Daire Bearce, Kieron Sutton, Ben Peter Scott, Neil Renton, Dan Hailstone

Yet more testaments to how much Adam Yauch entered our hearts, minds and record collections. You're bang on, Neil – his lyrics grew up with him, from his early rallying for teenage rowdiness to grittier politics later on. And while nobody knows the future of the Beastie Boys yet, their lasting influence – be it opening up hip-hop to a new generation of fans, to inspiring countless others to pick up a mic – will live on long after Yauch's death – JS

WHITER THAN WHITE?

From: David Hay
To: *NME*

Now, I think Jack White is a living legend, but I can't understand all the special releases he is putting out. A while back he put records straight onto eBay and, after the subscribers to the Vault service he provides complained, he spoke about supply and demand. Seriously, is anyone asking for a record that they have to break in order to get an exclusive unreleased song inside? Or one for which they have to pay nearly $100 because it has liquid inside?

CORBIS, GETTY

He spoke in *NME* about vinyl needing an innovation; but it seems so disingenuous when he comments on how much a 3rpm (which he himself admitted is impossible to play) went for on eBay or reports that he has broken the record for the highest-priced flexi disc of all time (when he released them by balloon). It seems as if he is reinventing vinyl to make more money, *and* for his ego; but then again, don't all artists have massive egos?

From: *NME*
To: David Hay
Well, David, personally I'm a sucker for novelty records. Put it on coloured vinyl or an unlistenable format and I'm all over it like a Belle & Sebastian fan in a cardigan shop. I do, however, agree that you might not want to pay full whack for music as an artefact. But, like big Jack says, if you don't want it, don't pay for it. You can still buy his tunes on all the normal formats if you wish. It might not be your cup of tea, and sure it might be an ego trip watching fans scrabble over your highly priced creations, but the world would be a dull place without people like Jack – JS

NO DIRECTION

From: Natalie Claure
To: *NME*
I don't appreciate what you reviewed on the most ASTONISHING BAND EVER CREATED. One Direction. On February 29, 2012 SO I will sue you for $1000,000,000.

From: *NME*
To: Natalie Claure
You are probably referring to One Direction being voted Worst Band at this year's NME Awards by our readers. I can only imagine, as this was two months ago, that your rage was of such huge proportions that you've only now been compos mentis enough to write in. Either that or you've been organising the world's top lawyers to take on each one of our One Direction-loathing readers. I'm trying to sympathise, but if the tiny Ken dolls really do it for you, then you're wandering around pop Eden as I can't escape their heinous bile pumping out of media outlets like an overflowing sewage pipe – JS

STALKER

From: Tom
To: *NME*
"My friend Fleur and I met Ian from Kasabian after an Absolute Radio intimate show in Soho. Top guys!"

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Web Slinging

The highlight of this week's NME.COM blogs

IN PRAISE OF POP NONSENSE

There's a meme floating around that compares Led Zep with Nicki Minaj (which is like comparing calculators and slippers). Minaj's lyrics, which apparently are a beacon of dimwittery, are shared: "*You a stupid hoe, you a, you a stupid hoe, you a stupid hoe, you a stupid hoe...*" and on it goes. This is directly compared to Zep's "*If the sun refused to shine, I would still be loving you. When mountains crumble to the sea, there will still be you and me. Kind woman, I give you my all. Kind woman, nothing more*".

This has generated untold thousands of Likes, and is meant to serve as an example of how great lyrics once were, compared with what music offers us now. Aside from the fact that Zep were responsible for some of the most hokey, irritatingly twee Hippie Poetry 101 lyrics ever committed to an ear, to compare the two is a complete nonsense. And besides, who says being 'clever' is a good idea? Rock'n'roll's very foundation is built on wilful nonsense and often, through musical gibberish, says far more than some berk twiddling their quill, getting all dewy eyed in reverie...

Read Mof Gimmers' article in full at NME.COM/blogs

Best of the responses...

The people who say pop music was better 20 years ago are the people who don't look for any good music but expect it to be handed to them through TV and radio with minimal effort from themselves.
Alex Norris

There'll always be those who know how to write poetry and put it to music, and there'll always be those who know how to get us all singing along. It's those who can do both that strike gold.
Dave Iannacone

I wouldn't ever cite Led Zeppelin as an example of lyrical greatness. If the meme were based on Morrissey, however...
Michael Carter

What I hate about this is the fact that Nicki Minaj and other artists create music for money, and money only. Artists like Led Zeppelin, Nirvana, Pearl Jam and other mainstream rock bands created music because they just loved it.
Sean Dykstra

A MANICS FAN WRITES, PT 243

From: Rosa Burgoyne
To: *NME*
Recently I bought the Manics' singles collection for my mum. I borrowed and devoured it and was amazed and angry at the same time. Amazed because it was fantastic; and angry because they seem to be the last band of their kind. They were intelligent, eloquent and politicised, but most of all the artwork, interviews and music screamed that they cared. Does anyone care any more? Where's the defining, interesting, intelligent band of our generation? It's not like there's nothing left to say. We're in a double dip recession and consumerist crap is littering the charts while it's cooler to be a brain-dead zombie on your iPhone than educate yourself. Someone please say it's OK to be intelligent and dress and think differently. Of course escapism is valuable in music, but there needs to be a balance. I understand why Britain's youth is disaffected and it's easier to bob along to Plan B's music than listen to his scathing lyrics, but try. Because everyone reading this has an opportunity to say something wonderful and I desperately want (and need) them to. I don't want our generation to be the one that doesn't care and flicks a middle finger to having a youth revolution because staring at the black mirror of a computer screen is easier. Admittedly maybe I'm being premature (I am only 13) but there's got to be someone waiting to pick up a guitar and change the world. I can't be the only one. I feel like it could take just one band to spearhead a youth revolution. It's just worrying that we could spiral into a quicksand of apathy. Almost every other generation has had their way of having some sort of youth revolution, something that differentiates them from the rest, ie '70s punk, '80s indie. They created worlds to live in and fandoms to enjoy being part of. They were bands that spoke for us. We were united but now we're so disparate. Our generation just feels boring, insipid and pointless. Sorry if this feels disjointed, I just had to let rip. Not everything is shit now but sometimes it feels like it. The stuff that isn't doesn't get the amount of love it deserves. Instead we get One Direction. Good luck, humankind.

From: *NME*
To: Rosa Burgoyne
Rosa – go pick up a guitar RIGHT FUCKING NOW and start writing songs. But also remember there are plenty of bands out there with something to say – look at Pussy Riot in Russia. They've been banged up in a prison cell for months now and face seven years in jail because they spoke out about Putin's oppressive government. But while bands like The Enemy might be bawling in these pages about how they're leaving politics out of their music, you're right that artists like Plan B do have something to say. So go forth, young Rosa, and start a revolution! And while I await your generation-shifting debut, I'm off to while away the day reading the *Communist Manifesto* and Tony Benn's diaries while listening to 'The Holy Bible' for the 10,000th time – JS

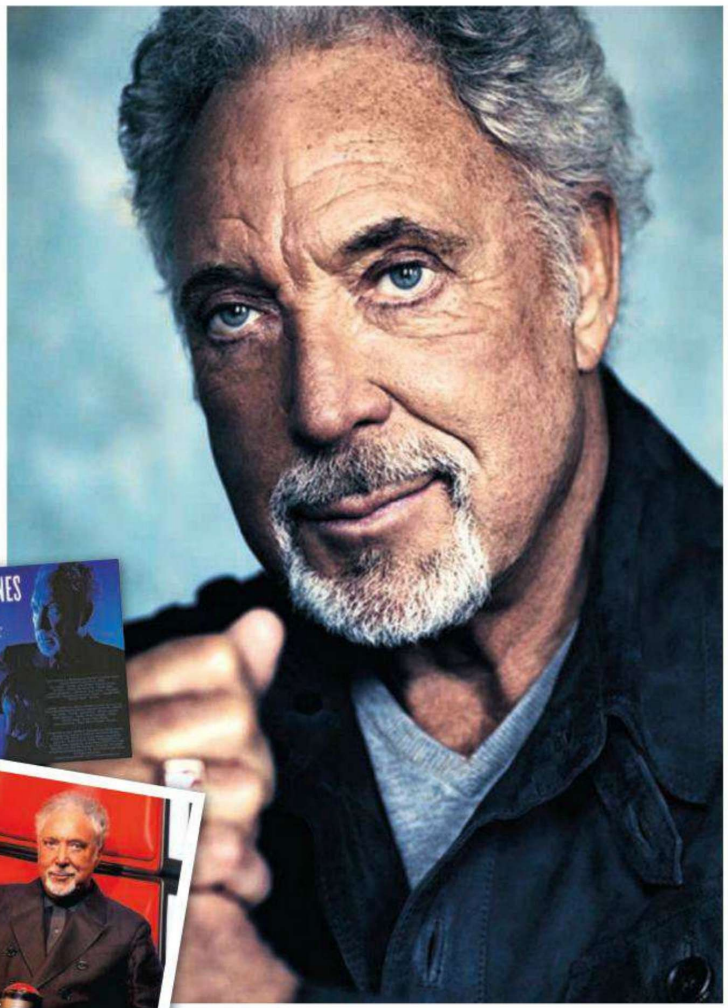
STALKER

From: Kelly
To: *NME*
"Myself and Miguel and Johnny from Tribes after their gig at the Wedgewood Rooms. They were amazing!"

DOES ROCK'N'ROLL KILL BRAINCELLS?

TESTING MUSICIANS' MEMORIES AFTER A LIFETIME OF ABUSE

This Week TOM JONES



QUESTION 1

Name three boxing matches before which you have sung either the British or Welsh National Anthem...

"I've sung the Welsh National Anthem once at a boxing match, at the Calzaghe fight (below). I've sung 'God Save The Queen' twice for Ricky Hatton. They know I like boxing and I know Ricky and Joe, so there was a connection."

Correct. Before Hatton Vs Floyd Mayweather Jr in 2007, Calzaghe Vs Bernard Hopkins in 2008 and Hatton Vs Manny Pacquiao in 2009

And... in the blue corner...

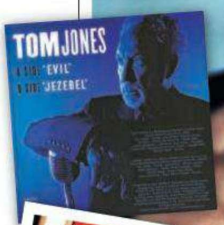
QUESTION 2

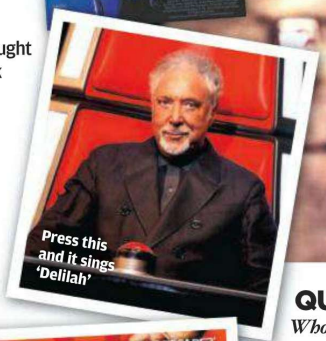
The three-coloured 7-inch vinyl edition (right) of your collaboration with Jack White, 'Evil', was only available from one record shop this year. In which city was it?

"Cardiff. Am I supposed to remember the shop?"

Correct. Spillers in Cardiff

"I used to go there a lot. I've bought quite a few records there. Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley."





Press this and it sings 'Delilah'

QUESTION 3

Why is Carlton surprised you are his guardian angel when you turn up in an episode of The Fresh Prince Of Bel Air?

"'Cos I'm white."

Correct. He says he always thought his guardian angel would be black

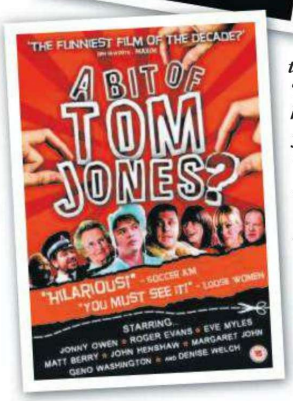
"And I say, 'I knew Otis Redding.'"

QUESTION 4

What is the basic plot to the 2009 indie film, A Bit Of Tom Jones?

"Um... the characters think that they have my private part. But in actual fact, it's a donkey's dangler."

Correct. It's a Welsh film about a prostitute who claims she has Tom Jones' severed penis to sell



QUESTION 5

Who sings these lyrics? "I owe my life to 'What's New Pussycat'/ 'Delilah' stopped me hating you/I used to call you Satan/And you were Cruella De'Ville/Now you call me your Delilah/ I'm not your Lucifer/I'm just your pussycat"?

"I've never heard that."

Wrong. 'The Ballad Of Tom Jones'. You did know that!

"Ah, shit, of course. With Cerys [Matthews] and Tommy Scott [from Space]. They both went on to feature on my album 'Reload'."

QUESTION 6

How much money was it rumoured you had your chest hair insured for?

"It wasn't true. I don't know."

Wrong. $7million

"I'd shave my own bloody chest hair off for seven million dollars."

QUESTION 7

How fast did you complete the Star In A Reasonably Priced Car track in Top Gear?

"Oh, I can't remember."

Wrong. 1:52:2. Not bad

"I knew I didn't do bad. I like cars. I don't have many. I have a Porsche and a Rolls. They're easy to drive because they're automatic. When I did *Top Gear*, I told them I hadn't driven a bloody gear car with a stick shift since 1966."

QUESTION 8

What song did Elvis annoy you with by constantly singing when you were in Las Vegas with him in 1968?

"I don't know if he annoyed me with it, but he kept singing, 'Why Me, Lord?'. He just wouldn't let me get out of the room. He liked to sing all night. I had two shows to do the following day and I was trying to get out of the door... then he'd start singing it all over again."

Correct. Kris Kristofferson's 1973 hit 'Why Me', titled by Elvis as 'Why Me, Lord?'

Which one's the keeper, Priscilla?

QUESTION 9

Why does Mr Burns have you kidnapped when you guest star in The Simpsons?

"Because he wants to grab hold of Marge Simpson."

Correct. To impress Marge, who has started working in Springfield's nuclear power plant

"The only thing that I asked them was, I wanted to see my cartoon before. They sent it over and I said, 'Great'."

QUESTION 10

How long, according to the show's website, does it take the chair on The Voice to rotate 180 degrees?

"Oh my God, I've never counted. I know it does it pretty quick."

Wrong. 3.5 seconds

"Oh."

Do you get to keep the chair after the series has finished?

"Not as far as I know!"

Total Score 6/10

"Oh great. I should have remembered the words to 'The Ballad Of Tom Jones'."

WORDS: RICH PELLEY PHOTOS: GETTY, WIREIMAGE, WALL TO WALL - DAVID VENNI

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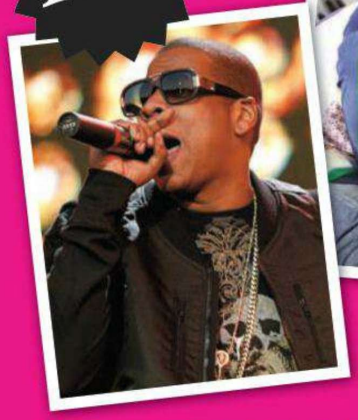

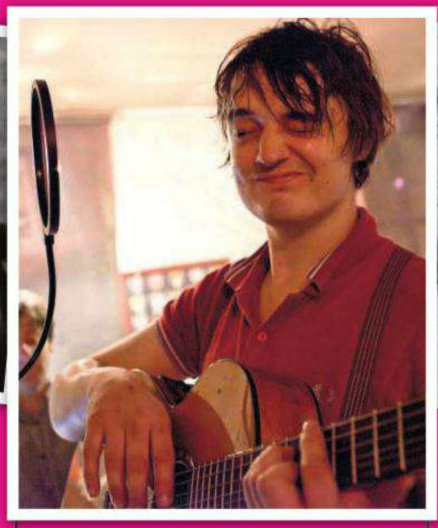

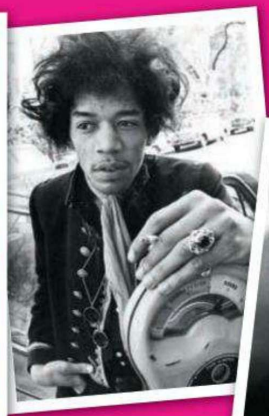

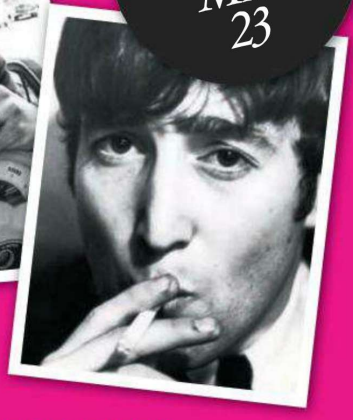

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